NATION

Week after riots, internet ban still on in Bareilly

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BUSINESS

Domestic air traffic falls to 1.29 cr in August

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SPORTS

Rahul & Jadeja's tons give India dominance over WI

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Army Chief to Pak: Won't show restraint next time

Air Chief says Pak lost 12 jets including F-16s during the Op

ANUPGARH/JAIPUR, 3 OCT

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi said on Friday that Pakistan should stop sponsoring terrorism on its soil if wants to retain its place on the world map.

The Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) also said the restraint shown by New Delhi during Operation Sindoor would not be repeated in case of a future military conflict and urged Indian soldiers to remain poised for action.

"India, as a country, is fully prepared this time. And this time, it will not show the restraint that it showed during Operation Sindoor 1.0. This time we will take a step forward and act in a manner that will make Pakistan think whether it wants to remain on the world map or not," Dwivedi said in an address to soldiers at Anupgarh in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar district.

The Army Chief told the soldiers to stay prepared. "Keep yourselves fully prepared now, if god wants, the opportunity will come soon".

Replying to a question about his appeal to those living near the international border, he said, "We consider the border population not as ordinary civilians but as soldiers."

Meanwhile, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said that at least a dozen Pakistani military aircraft including F-16 jets were destroyed or damaged in Indian strikes during Operation Sindoor, while describing Islamabad's claim of India's losses as "fanciful stories".

The Air Chief Marshal also said that the Indian action damaged a large number of military infrastructure in Pakistan that included hangars in three locations, radars in at least four places, command and control centres in two sites and runways in two air bases.

This was the first time the IAF confirmed hitting Pakistan's US-manufactured F-16 jets in a hangar in the air. —*PIT*

WHAT INDIA CLAIMS TO HAVE DAMAGED

Air Chief AP Singh said that India damaged the following Pakistani military infrastructure during Op Sindoor:

JETS DESTROYED

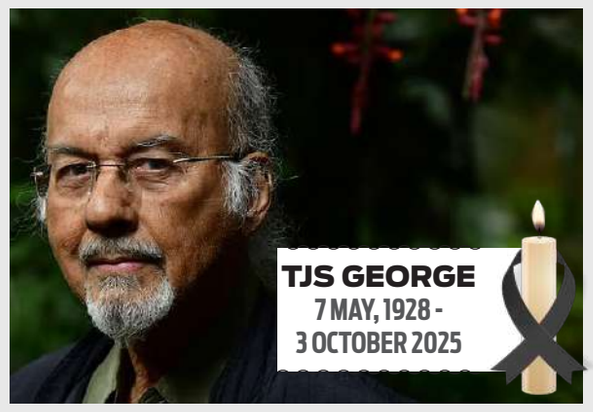
- 1 AEW&C (Airborne Early Warning & Control) aircraft.
- 1 C-130 class of aircraft
- 5 high-tech fighters jets (F-16 and JF-17s).
- This takes the total number of aircraft lost by Pakistan to 12-13

DAMAGED MILITARY INFRA

- Radars at 4 places
- Command and control centres at 2 places
- Runways at 2 places
- 3 of hangars in 3 different stations

If they (Pakistan) think they shot down 15 of my jets.... I hope they're convinced about it, and they'll cater for 15 less aircraft in my inventory when they come to fight again..... Let them be happy, as they need to show something to their audience to protect their reputation

—AP Singh, Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal



TJS GEORGE
7 MAY, 1928 - 3 OCTOBER 2025

Veteran journalist TJS George no more

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Veteran journalist and author TJS George passed away on Friday at a City hospital where he was recovering from age-related illnesses. He was 97.

A stalwart in Indian journalism, TJS, as he was popularly known, began his career with the Free Press Journal in Mumbai in 1950. After stints with the International Press Institute, The Searchlight and The Far Eastern Economic Review, he became the founding editor of Asiaweek in Hong Kong.

As an editor and later Editorial Advisor of The Indian Express, TJS was a leading voice against social injustice, corruption, religious intolerance, and threats to democracy. Known for his sharp wit and incisive writing, his weekly column "Point of View" in The New Indian Express ran for 25 years from 1997 until 2022, throwing a light on the degeneration of Indian politics and social issues with unmatched clarity.

In 1965, TJS was jailed for opposing Bihar Chief Minister KB Sahay, becoming the first newspaper editor to face a jail sentence in Independent India. VK Krishna Menon, then defence minister, appeared in court on his behalf.

TJS was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2011 for his outstanding contribution to literature and education. He also received Kerala's highest media recognition, the Swadeshabhimani-Kesari Award in 2019.

He served as Chairman of the Asian School of Journalism in Bengaluru in the 1990s.

—*Salar News*

Barring liquor, all M'rashtra shops to be open 24/7,

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

The Maharashtra government has officially announced that shops and commercial establishments, including hotels, restaurants, eateries, and places of public amusement, can remain open 24 hours across the state. A Government Resolution issued on 1 October clarified that liquor-serving outlets, including wine shops, beer bars, discotheques, hookah parlours, and permit rooms, remain restricted. Establishments must ensure each employee gets at least 24 hours of continuous weekly rest. Local administrations and police are tasked with strict enforcement. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray criticised the move, noting a similar policy existed since January 2020 and questioning the government's rationale. —*PTI*

Clashes break out over Durga pooja procession at JNU

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) alleged on Thursday that Left-affiliated student groups attacked a Durga idol-immersion procession at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), while Left organisations accused the ABVP of using religion for political propaganda through a Ravan Dahan programme. In a statement, the ABVP said Left groups, including the AISA, SFI and DSF, "violently attacked" the immersion procession around 7 pm, claiming that several male and female students were injured in stone-pelting and abused. However, the Left-affiliated All India Students' Association (AISA) rejected the charges and instead, accused the ABVP of depicting former JNU students Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam -- both under trial in cases relating to anti-CAA protests and the Delhi riots conspiracy -- as Ravan. —*PTI*

CM mulls extending deadline for caste survey

MYSURU, 3 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the government could extend the caste survey beyond the 7 October deadline, as the Social and Educational Survey began with a rocky start. For the first three days of the survey, the government received complaints of technical glitches and server issues, delaying the enumeration. Siddaramaiah said that if the technical issues were resolved successfully, the survey should be able to complete within the stipulated deadline. Responding to allegations that the survey is aimed at helping conversion, Siddaramaiah asked why the BJP leaders were not opposing the caste census ordered by the Centre. "We are not doing caste survey. We are doing socio-economic and educational survey. How is this going to create rift between castes?" —*Salar News*

>>>More on Page 2

Wangchuk's wife moves SC over his NSA arrest

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Gitanjali J Angmo, wife of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, has approached the Supreme Court challenging his detention under the National Security Act (NSA) and seeking his immediate release.

Wangchuk was arrested on 26 September, two days after protests in Ladakh demanding statehood and Sixth Schedule status left four dead and 90 injured. He is lodged in Jodhpur jail, Rajasthan.

Filed through senior lawyers Vivek Tankha and Sarvam Ritam Khare, the habeas corpus plea seeks urgent listing, quashing of the preventive detention order, and directions for the Ladakh UT administration to produce Wangchuk before the court. It also requests immediate access to him, both telephonic and in person.

The plea alleges the detention is 'illegal, arbitrary, and unconstitutional,' violating Articles 14, 19, 21, and 22. It notes Wangchuk's long-standing record as a peaceful innovator, environmentalist, and social reformer advocating democratic and ecological causes in Ladakh.

It states Wangchuk was shifted to Jodhpur without medicines, personal belongings, or access to family and counsel. Grounds for detention have not been provided. Angmo claims she is under virtual house arrest, and students and staff of the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh (HIAL), face harassment.

The plea highlights the psychological impact on the Ladakh community, citing a reported suicide linked to Wangchuk's detention. It seeks directions to ensure his basic necessities, produce detention records, provide medical reports, and stop harassment of HIAL and its members. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Russia may buy more agri, pharma goods from India

MOSCOW, 3 OCT

Russian President Vladimir Putin has instructed his government to explore measures to reduce the trade imbalance with India, including purchasing more agricultural products and medicines. The move comes amid heavy crude imports from Russia to India, which have skewed trade figures.

Speaking at the Valdai plenary session, Putin noted that proposals will be made to India on "the most promising areas of cooperation and how Russia can smoothen the imbalance in trade and other areas." He identified financing, logistics, and payment bottlenecks as key concerns and highlighted that trade turnover between the two countries, around USD 63 billion, is below potential given India's 1.5 billion population.

Putin said Russia may increase purchases of Indian agricultural and medicinal products to correct the imbalance. He also lauded the vast potential for economic cooperation, particularly in pharmaceuticals and AI technologies.

Putin emphasised the special nature of Russia-India relations since the Soviet era and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "balanced, wise, and nationally oriented" leader. Putin said he looked forward to his early December visit to India to meet "my friend" Modi. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

KANTARA & OG REMOVED

Canadian theatre pulls out Indian films after 2 attacks

ONTARIO, 3 OCT

A movie theatre in Oakville, Ontario, has withdrawn the screenings of Indian films after suffering two violent, targeted attacks within a week. Film.ca Cinemas was first attacked on 25 September, when arsonists attempted to set fire to its main entrance using flammable liquid, causing moderate damage. A week later, on 2 Oct, another assailant opened fire, discharging multiple rounds through the theatre's front doors.

Police have yet to confirm a motive but sources suggest possible links to Khalistani extremist groups. The cinema had been showing 'Kantara: A Legend Chapter 1' and 'They Call Him OG', which were quickly removed from the schedule.

Film.ca stated that while it had no desire to bow to intimidation, community safety had to come first. Soon after, York Cinemas also suspended all Indian film screenings "until further notice." —*Agencies*

CPI, CPI(M) demand 35 seats in Bihar polls: 'Big parties must share'

PATNA, 3 OCT

The CPI and CPI(M) on Friday demanded a total of 35 seats in the upcoming Bihar polls as part of the Mahagathbandhan, stressing the need for the Opposition alliance to finalise the seat-sharing agreement without delay.

The two Left parties also demanded that RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav be declared the Chief Ministerial face of the alliance as soon as possible.

While the CPI demanded 24 seats, the CPI(M) sought 11 seats to contest the elections as part of the RJD-led Mahagathbandhan, which also comprises the Congress and CPIML (Liberation), among others.

- The two Left parties also demanded that RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav be declared the Chief Ministerial face of the Mahagathbandhan bloc ('grand alliance') as soon as possible

Addressing a press conference, CPI state Secretary Ram Naresh Pandey said, "The big parties in Mahagathbandhan will have to sacrifice a few of their seats in favour of CPI and CPI(M)."

He also announced that CPI and CPI(M) will hold joint conferences in all districts to ensure their cadres "verify the authenticity of deletions in the final voters' list released by the EC".

CPI(M) state secretary Lalan Choudhary said the strike rate of the two parties was impressive in the 2020 assembly elections.

""We are parties with reliable grassroots cadre, strong organisational capacity, and firm ideological control over our workers," he said. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

PROBE ORDERED

Tiger found burnt & mutilated at MM Hills

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Another tiger was killed in the Hanur range of the Male Mahadeshwara Hills forest. The tiger's carcass was found half-burnt and mutilated during a routine inspection by forest officials at Chamarajangar district on Thursday.

The tiger was chopped into three pieces, but valuable parts like the canines were left intact.

Notably, the incident occurred on the the very first day of Wildlife Week.

State Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar B Khandre has ordered an investigation to be carried out by a team led by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Smitha Bijjur.

Issuing a written order to the Additional Chief Secretary, Khandre instructed that a special team headed by Bijjur be formed to personally visit the Pachchedoddi village area where the tiger was found, and to conduct an on-site inspection.

The minister also directed the team to review poaching cases over the past reported in the Male Mahadeshwara Hills forest over the last three years and examine earlier investigation reports. He emphasised the need to take preventive measures to ensure such incidents do not recur.

MM Hills deputy conservator R Bhaskar who also visited the spot, ordered an inquiry and launched a combing operation to trace the poachers. The team also used sniffer dog service to nab the poachers.

Khandre ordered that a detailed report must be submitted within eight days. He also ordered urgent steps to identify the tiger killers and bring them to justice under the law.

The incident comes on the heels of several high-profile animal deaths in the State. —*Salar News*

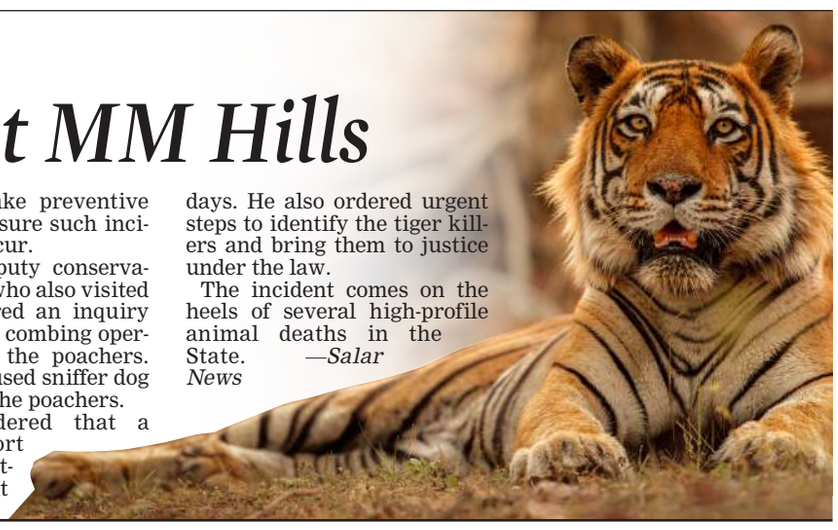


PHOTO: ANI

New train launched between Bidar and Bengaluru Cantt

KALABURAGI, 3 OCT

Indian Railways has announced the launch of special train services connecting Bidar and Bengaluru Cantt, stopping at Kalaburagi and Shahabad in the State. The first service, train 07063, will depart Bidar at 2.40pm on 4 October, arriving in Bengaluru Cantt at 5.00am the following day. Conversely, train 07064 will leave Bengaluru Cantt at 10.30pm on 5 October, reaching Bidar by 2.40pm the next day. The service will make multiple halts, including Humnabad and Guntakal, and comprise 24 coaches featuring one AC-II Tier, two AC-III Tier, 17 Sleeper Class, two General Second Class, and two Luggage Cum Brake Vans. Reservations are open through various channels, and passengers are reminded to travel with valid tickets to avoid inconvenience. —*ANI*

5 guarantees improved lives: Cong

Congress cites study, but JD(S) supremo Deve Gowda claims guarantees bankrupted State

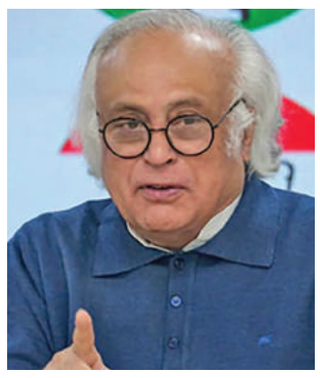
BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Citing an independent study, Congress General Secretary in-charge on Friday communications Jairam Ramesh said five guarantee schemes have delivered long term social impacts, while JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda alleged that the financial condition of State has worsened due to the Congress' schemes.

Ramesh cited a study, led by researcher Tara Krishnaswamy, in collaboration with Lokniti-CSDS, Bangalore University, Tumkur University and Indus Action, to say that women in the State are healthier, more mobile, and empowered in the family and in society.

However, Deve Gowda hit back. "The financial condition of the state has worsened due to 'guarantees'. It's not me who is saying this, but the Congress MLAs," the former PM said at a press conference in City.

He also claimed that there was no money to deal with the severe flood situation in six districts of north Karnataka, including Kalaburagi. The 92-year-old JD(S) patriarch said he would visit Kalaburagi and neighbouring flood-hit regions within a week to assess the ground situation.



JD(S) supremo Deve Gowda and Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh PHOTO: PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD/PTI

"They (Congress MLAs) say there is no money even to deal with such a severe flood situation," he said.

Maharashtra's release of water from its dams has led to flooding in the Bhima and Krishna rivers. Kalaburagi, Vijayapura, Bidar and Yadgir are among the worst-affected districts.

Gowda also said he would meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to seek compensation for the flood-affected people. "More than 50 people lost their lives, and there is a huge loss to livestock".

Gowda clarified that the BJP-JD(S) alliance would continue. "There is no need to worry about the alliance. It will continue even for Panchayat and Assembly elections".

Emphasising his cordial ties with Modi, Gowda said, "My relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi will never change. Show me one instance where I have spoken ill of him in the last 10 years".

The former prime minister also said he has set a target of winning at least 50 to 60 seats in the upcoming Bengaluru Municipal Corporation elections. —*PTI*

HOW HAVE THE 5 GUARANTEES HELPED PEOPLE?

The independent study was conducted for a year and covered 6,300 women across 15 districts in the State. Here's a breakdown of what Ramesh said the study showed:

SHAKTI (free travel to women):

- 19% of the beneficiaries found paid work or better jobs due to the mobility provided by buses.
- 34% In Bengaluru Urban district, this proportion rose to
- 80% of the beneficiaries reported increased healthcare access.
- 72% reported that the scheme boosted their self-confidence and empowerment.

GRUHA JYOTHI (free electricity):

- 72% of the women beneficiaries reported that their families now had greater utilisation of electricity.
- 43% purchased new time-saving and quality of life enhancing appliances.

GRUHA LAKSHMI (Rs 2,000 to woman heads of families):

- 94% used some part of the money on supplementing diet & nutrition.
- 90% on healthcare.
- 50% for their children's education.

ANNA BHAGYA (10kg rice to BPL families):

- 91% of families increased spending on supplementary nutrition such as vegetables and milk as the scheme covers their grains.

YUVA NIDHI (Financial aid between Rs 3,000-1,500 to unemployed graduates)

- 42% used the funds for skill development and employment.

DEADLY ROADS

Despite the government's promises to fix City roads, a massive pothole on Jayamahal Main Road remains a daily threat to motorists and pedetrians, on Friday PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Siddaramaiah will step down in Nov, claims Ashoka

BELAGAVI, 3 OCT

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka predicted that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would step down within the next two months, pointing to internal scuffles within the Congress. He also accused the ruling party of being in a "coma" while farmers suffer and people lose their homes in flood-hit districts of the State.

Speaking to reporters in Belagavi, Ashoka claimed there was an agreement on leadership rotation and that it was already causing tension within the government. "By November or December, Siddaramaiah will have to give up the post. Differences are evident, and one minister has already resigned," he said.

Ashoka added that if the Congress government were to collapse, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would not seek to form an alternative administration but was prepared for fresh elections

Ashoka also slammed the government for their action on the flood-hit districts.

"The government is sleeping; it is in coma. No minister is visiting any district. Farmers are suffering, poor people have lost their homes, but the state government is not taking any action," he said. "CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar did not come to Belagavi when farmers were suffering, but they are coming to eat biriyani."

Ashoka alleged that the Congress blames the Centre for everything. "For everything, they blame Modi... But the State government is not working. They are fighting for the CM's post." —*Salar News*

> There is a cold war brewing within the Congress. 100 per cent... CM will change. I don't know whether it is going to be DK Shivakumar or Home Minister G Parameshwara, or PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi. Anybody can be a lottery CM.
> -R Ashoka, Opposition Leader

Man threatens to leak wife's private videos, booked

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

A man and three members of his family have been booked under the Dowry Prohibition Act and other sections of the IPC for allegedly harassing his wife, threatening to release her private videos, police said on Friday.

According to a complaint filed at Puttenahalli police station, the 35-year-old woman was engaged to Syed Inam Ul Haq in September 2024 and married him in December the same year as per Muslim customs. She alleged that at the time of marriage, 340gms of gold ornaments and a two-wheeler were given as dowry.

Soon after marriage, she claimed, Haq revealed he was already married and pressured her into physical relations with his associates. When she refused, he allegedly threatened to release intimate photos and videos secretly recorded without her consent. She also alleged physical assaults in public and at her parental home, and harassment by her in-laws. —*PTI*

CM mulls extending caste survey deadline

MYSURU, 3 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the government could extend the deadline for the caste survey beyond the 7 October deadline, as the Social and Educational Survey began with a rocky start.

For the first three days of the survey, the government received complaints of technical glitches and server issues, delaying the enumeration.

Siddaramaiah said that if the technical issues were resolved successfully, the survey should be able to complete within the stipulated deadline."The progress of the survey will be monitored, and future decisions will be taken accordingly," he said, speaking to reporters on Friday at his Mysuru residence. "I hope the survey will be completed within the set deadline." As of Thursday, enumerators had covered 3 crore people visiting 80 lakh houses across the State.

Siddaramaiah said that it is not a caste survey but an exercise to know the social and education background of people. He added that the government was not seeking to divide castes, but the survey was an exercise to know the social and education background of people.

He also accused Union minister Prahlad Joshi of twisting the facts over the GST slab cuts. GST reduction is an election gimmick of BJP aimed at wooing the voters in Bihar, he said, scoffing at Joshi's request that people should celebrate the cuts.

On tax-devolution, he said the State government could approach the Supreme Court to request the Union government to release funds. —*Salar News*

BJP designed vote theft conspiracy: Surjewala

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

- Surjewala said the Congress party has launched a nationwide signature campaign on 'vote Chori' against the BJP and the ECI

Congress General Secretary and Karnataka in charge Randeep Singh Surjewala on Friday accused the BJP of a "designed conspiracy" to steal people's mandate through 'Vote Chori' (vote theft).

He claimed that 'Vote Chori' is not just restricted to Mahadevapura Assembly constituency, or Aland, or even the assembly constituency in Maharashtra whose record was released by Rahul Gandhi.

"The 'Vote Chori', stealing of people's mandate is a designed attack on India's constitution and democracy. The sinister forces of the BJP are taking away your right to elect a person of your choice," Surjewala told reporters as he launched a signature campaign in Pulakeshinagar in the City against alleged vote theft.

He said the "designed conspiracy" is to take away one man, one vote, principle enshrined in the Constitution.

Calling it "an attack on the soul of the country and democracy of India", Surjewala said the Congress party has launched a nationwide signature campaign on 'vote Chori' against the forces of the BJP that have indulged in vote theft and the "captive" Election Commission of India, which he alleged has remained a "mute spectator" and a "participant."

BACKS DKS

On Congress party issuing notice to leaders after the recent power sharing statements, he dismissed reports about any dissent in the party.

"Our PCC (Pradesh Congress Committee) President, who also happens to be Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, is fully authorised to ensure that everybody toes the party line and does not speak beyond their briefs," Surjewala said. —*PTI*

AICC General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala and others held a signature collection and public awareness campaign against 'vote theft' at Periyar Nagar Circle in City on Friday PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

8-yr-old girl dies due to alleged medical negligence

KOLAR, 3 OCT

An eight-year-old girl, Tanvi, passed away at Jalappa Hospital in Kolar on Thursday evening, following an alleged negligence of a doctor who administered an overdose of medication in Santhehalli village, Malur taluk.

Sources said Tanvi, a resident of Dodda Igalur village, had been suffering from fever for four to five days before her parents took her to a non-registered medical practitioner (RMP) in Santhehalli. However, after receiving an injection, her condition deteriorated, prompting her parents to rush her to Jalappa Hospital Kola, where she died. Her parents filed a complaint. —*Salar News*

6 ARRESTED

Man murdered over Rs 5.25 cr insurance

Yohan P Honnaddi
VIJAYANAGARA, 3 OCT

In a chilling case from Vijayanagara district, six people have been arrested for allegedly murdering a 35-year-old man after taking out an accident and other insurance policies worth Rs 5.25 crore in his name and attempting to claim the payout.

The police stated in a press release that the victim, K Gangadhar, a resident of Kaulpet in Hosapete taluk, was found dead near the HLC canal on 28 September. He was initially suspected to have died in a two-wheeler accident. However, his wife, K Sharadamma, raised doubts, pointing out that her husband suffered from serious health problems, including a stroke, and did not even know how to ride a motorcycle.

K Gangadhar PHOTO: SALAR

- He was initially suspected to have died in a two-wheeler accident. However, his wife, K Sharadamma, raised doubts, pointing out that her husband suffered from serious health problems, including a stroke, and did not even know how to ride a motorcycle

The arrested accused include Ravi Gosangi, 26, mechanic, Koppal; P Ajay, 22, mechanic, Hosapete; Riaz, 27, pan shop owner, Hosapete; RY Yogaraj Singh, 36, Bank manager, Hosapete; Krishnappa, 51, vice principal, Govt PU College, Gangavati; and Huligemma, 31, Hosapete resident.

According to Superintendent of Police S Jahnavi, the group opened a fake bank account and registered another marriage in Gangadhar's name, showing a woman conspirator as his wife. Using these forged documents, they purchased the policies, paying the premiums themselves.

When Gangadhar did not die within the expected timeframe, the accused feared rejection of the policies. They then decided to kill him and stage the death as a road accident to ensure accident insurance could be claimed. Their attempt to file claims later exposed the fraud.

"No amount has been settled. The accused only tried to claim the money, but their conspiracy was unearthed before payout," SP Jahnavi confirmed.

Police said further investigation will establish how the victim came in contact with the accused, and how individuals from such varied backgrounds conspired to plot his murder. —*Salar News*

Govt to launch 'Neeriddre Nale' on 9 Oct

KOLAR, 3 OCT

The Karnataka government on Friday announced that the Department of Minor Irrigation and Groundwater Development will soon launch a special initiative titled 'Neeriddre Nale–Water is Future' to strengthen the State's future through the conservation of traditional water sources and enhancement of groundwater levels.

The programme will be rolled out under the guidance of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on October 9, Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology N S Boseraju said.

According to a statement from the Minister's office, noted actor Vasista Simha has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador for the Department of Minor Irrigation and Groundwater Development to connect with the younger generation on water conservation.

"He will play an active role in awareness drives across the state, including campaigns on lake rejuvenation, rainwater harvesting, and community participation," the statement said. Minister Boseraju added that Simha has agreed to serve as the ambassador without any remuneration.

Citing the Karnataka Economic Survey 2024–25, the minister noted that nearly 60 per cent of the state's total agricultural land is now dependent on borewells, up sharply from 37 per cent a few decades ago.

The upcoming programme aims to raise public awareness on sustainable water use and groundwater conservation, while working towards building a water-secure and resilient Karnataka. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

BJP appoints Aditya Sahu as its J'khand President

NEW DELHI/RANCHI, 3 OCT

BJP has appointed Rajya Sabha MP Aditya Sahu as the new working president of its Jharkhand state unit, replacing former MP Ravindra Kumar Ray, who held the charge for about a year. The announcement was made by national President JP Nadda. The move follows BJP's defeat to Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in the last assembly elections and signals an effort to strengthen the party's organisational machinery in the eastern state. Speaking in Ranchi, Sahu said, "I have been a BJP worker since 1980 and will continue to serve the party with honesty, commitment and dedication." He added that party and national interests would remain paramount, emphasising his focus on rebuilding and consolidating the party in Jharkhand. —*PTI*

Canadian Envoy presents credentials to Prez

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday accepted the credentials of Canadian High Commissioner Christopher Cooter, who formally took charge in New Delhi nearly a year after India-Canada ties were strained over the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Relations soured in October last year when Ottawa alleged Indian involvement in Nijjar's death, prompting New Delhi to recall its high commissioner and expel five Canadian diplomats. Canada responded by removing an equal number of Indian officials. A thaw began in June, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian counterpart Mark Carney agreed to pursue "constructive" steps to restore stability, including the reinstatement of senior envoys. —*PTI*

Jains contribute 24% of India's taxes: Rajnath

HYDERABAD, 3 OCT

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday praised the Jain community for its outsized contribution to India's economy, despite representing only 0.5 per cent of the population. Speaking at the inaugural session of the three-day JITO (Jain International Trade Organisation) Connect 2025, Singh noted that the community contributes an estimated 24 per cent of the nation's total tax collections. He described Jains as a "hard-working and prosperous society" excelling in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, aviation, and education. Singh also highlighted the community's philosophical and cultural roots, linking them to India's rich spiritual heritage. He predicted that India, with such industrious contributions, would soon become the "factory of the world." —*PTI*

India's dairy sector grew 70% in 11 years: Shah

ROHTAK, 3 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said India's dairy sector has grown by 70 per cent in the past 11 years, making it the fastest-growing in the world. Speaking at the inauguration of the new Sabar Dairy Plant in Haryana's Industrial Model Township, he noted that milk production has risen from 146 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 239 million tonnes, while per capita availability has increased from 124g to 471g. Built at a cost of Rs 325 crore, the plant is the largest facility in India for curd, buttermilk and yoghurt, with daily capacities of 150 metric tonnes of curd, 3 lakh litres of buttermilk and 10 lakh litres of yoghurt. Shah also outlined the government's White Revolution 2.0 plans to further expand cooperatives. —*PTI*

Madras HC orders SIT to probe Karur stampede

DMK says Vijay's failed acting skills will not work in real life

CHENNAI/MADURAI, 3 OCT

The Madras High Court on Friday ordered setting up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under senior IPS officer Asra Garg to probe the 27 September stampede during actor-politician Vijay's rally in Karur that killed 41 people and left over 60 dead.

Garg is presently Inspector Genera of Police, North Zone.

A single judge bench also reportedly criticised the functionaries of Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) over the incident.

Additionally, Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK has slammed TVK Chief Vijay for his alleged "arrogance, hunger for money, publicity mania and the desire for chair," and said his challenge to the state government to arrest him for the stampede was aimed at diverting attention away from the deaths of as many as 41 people.

The ruling party said Vijay's acting skills, which "failed" long ago in the field of cinema, will not succeed in real life as well.

Against this background, the DMK organ said that Vijay was pressured to announce Rs 20 lakh solatium to the families of victims as the CM disbursed Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of those killed.

The actor-politician Vijay has reportedly not given the assured money to the kin of those who died in the 27 September stampede during his rally in Karur, Tamil Nadu PHOTO: PTI

The government has already disbursed the solatium to the families of those who died in the stampede. However, Vijay has not given the assured money to the kin of those who died in the stampede.

Meanwhile, Madras High Court rejected BJP leader Uma Anandan's plea for a CBI probe into the stampede.

> **Of course, there's no interest. It is a petty act of seeking political gain in view of the 2026 Assembly election**
>
>
>
> -MK Stalin, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

She had moved the court saying there were many questions, including possible official apathy behind the fatal incident.

A division bench, while rejecting the plea, asked the petitioner to approach the Madurai bench of the HC, the jurisdictional court.

Furthermore, the High Court dismissed the anticipatory bail petitions of two senior functionaries of actor Vijay's TVK in connection with the.

The court dismissed the pleas of TVK state General Secretary Bussy N Anand and Deputy General Secretary CTR Nirmal Kumar, who have been named in FIR in connection with the incident. —*PTI*

'WILL HOIST BLACK FLAGS'

Pak must be held accountable: MEA on PoK protests

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD, 3 OCT

India on Friday said Pakistan must be held accountable for its "horrific" human rights violations against innocent protesters in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Several areas in PoK have witnessed widespread protests with people demanding basic rights, justice and an end to what they described as systemic oppression.

"We have seen reports on protests in several areas of Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir, including brutalities by Pakistani forces on innocent civilians," external affairs ministry spokesperson **Randhir Jaiswal** said.

"We believe that it is a natural consequence of Pakistan's oppressive approach and its systemic plundering of resources from these territories, which remain under its forcible and illegal occupation," he said. "Pakistan must be held accountable for its horrific human rights violations," he said.

PHOTO: ANI

Additionally, The Pakistan Journalists Union announced a "black day" to be observed on Friday after the alleged assault on journalists at the Islamabad National Press Club on Thursday, Dawn reported.

Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) President Afzal Butt said, "The journalists are furious at the moment." He said that all press clubs across Pakistan will hoist black flags in condemnation of this act.

According to Pakistan media reports, the Lawyers Community of POJK were staging a peaceful protest at the press club when police attacked them. —*PTI/ANI*

UP CM's remarks: J&K BJP leader threatens to resign

JAMMU, 3 OCT

Jahanzaib Sirwal, a leader of the Jammu and Kashmir BJP, has threatened to resign, condemning Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's remarks as "unacceptable" and criticising the police's "vindictive" approach towards the Muslim community. Sirwal stated the situation in Uttar Pradesh contradicts Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' and called for "impartial investigations" to hold all wrongdoers accountable.

The controversy arose after police filed an FIR against 24 individuals in Kanpur for displaying "I Love Muhammad" signs during an Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi procession. Clashes in Bareilly led to the arrest of 68 people. Sirwal, a proud Muslim and committed BJP leader, expressed deep pain over the state's actions, alleging they are targeting the community's expression of faith.

PHOTO: ANI

He emphasised that such actions violate constitutional rights under Article 25 and called for the party leadership to quash unjust FIRs and release detained individuals. "If these actions reflect the party's stance, I humbly accept expulsion, for my 'Iman' (faith) will always stand above all else," he asserted, urging for justice and communal harmony. —*PTI*

PM to unveil ₹62,000 cr schemes in Bihar

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will unveil youth-focused initiatives exceeding Rs 62,000 crore on Saturday, aimed at strengthening education, skills and entrepreneurship.

The highlight is PM-SETU (Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs), a centrally sponsored scheme worth 60,000 crore. It will modernise 1,000 government ITIs through a hub-and-spoke model of 200 hubs and 800 spokes. Managed by industry partners with support from the World Bank and ADB, these clusters will offer advanced training, digital learning, innovation centres and placement services.

PHOTO: PTI

Modi will also inaugurate 1,200 vocational skill labs in Navodaya Vidyalayas and Eklavya Model Schools across 34 states and UTs. Aligned with NEP 2020, the labs will provide training in 12 high-demand sectors such as IT, agriculture, electronics and tourism.

In Bihar, a major focus area, Modi will launch the revamped Mukhyamantri Nishchay Svyam Sahayata Bhatta Yojana, giving five lakh graduates a monthly allowance of Rs1,000 for two years, along with free skill training.

Other key projects include the Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Skill University, new academic facilities under PM-USHA in four Bihar universities, and the new Bihta campus of NIT Patna, featuring a 5G lab, ISRO-linked space centre and incubation hub. —*PTI*

BIHAR CM NITISH KUMAR ALLOCATES RS 2,500 CRORE TO 25 LAKH WOMEN

PATNA, 3 OCT

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has disbursed Rs 2,500 crore to 25 lakh beneficiaries of the 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana', bringing the total number of women receiving Rs 10,000 each under the scheme to one crore. This was announced at an event at his official residence. Kumar stated, "We intend to cover, under this scheme, one woman from every family." He also noted that further disbursements will continue weekly until all women are included. Critics from the opposition have labelled the initiative as a populist tactic lacking innovation. —*PTI*

CEC, ECS TO REVIEW BIHAR POLL READINESS ON 4-5 OCTOBER

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Vivek Joshi and SS Sandhu, will visit Patna on 4 and 5 October to assess the readiness for upcoming Bihar Assembly elections. With the 243-member Assembly term ending on November 22, polls are expected in late October and November. The final electoral roll, published on 30 September, includes nearly 7.42 crore electors. The EC stated, "We will not allow any eligible citizen to be left out of the voters' list." —*PTI*

Security forces arrest 4 militants in Manipur

IMPHAL, 3 OCT

- Authorities recovered two AK-47 rifles, 181 rounds of various ammunition, cash amounting to Rs 1,00,000, and a vehicle from his possession.

Security forces in Manipur have apprehended four militants, including the self-styled chief of a banned Kuki outfit, according to police reports. Paokholen Guite, claiming the title of 'commander-in-chief' of the Chin Kuki Mizo Army (CKMA), was arrested on Wednesday in S Munuam, Churachandpur district.

Guite is alleged to be involved in weapon and drug trafficking across the India-Myanmar border, as well as extortion activities. Authorities recovered two AK-47 rifles, 181 rounds of various ammunition, cash amounting to Rs 1,00,000, and a vehicle from his possession.

Additionally, security forces detained two members of the banned People's Liberation Army (PLA) in separate operations on Thursday in Imphal West district. They are suspected of extorting money from brick field owners and local residents. Another PLA member was arrested at his home in Yairipok, Thoubal district, and is also implicated in extorting money from quarry workers.

In September, PLA had conducted an ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy in Bishnupur, resulting in deaths of two personnel. —*PTI*

Shiv Sena rift deepens over Thackeray death claims

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam has reiterated his claim that party founder **Bal Thackeray**'s body was kept at his Mumbai residence, Matoshree, for two days before his death was officially announced in 2012.

Speaking a day after raising the allegation at a Dussehra rally, Kadam also said the late leader's fingerprints were taken posthumously and called for a narco-analysis test on himself and Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray to uncover the truth. The claims received backing from two ministers. Social Justice Minister Sanjay Shirsat said there was substance to Kadam's assertions, while BJP cabinet member Nitesh Rane alleged Uddhav Thackeray prevented his father, former chief minister Narayan Rane, from meeting Bal Thackeray in his final days.

PHOTO: ANI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut strongly criticised Kadam, calling his remarks a betrayal of the party founder. Kadam, an ally of Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, has previously accused Uddhav Thackeray of mishandling the patriarch's final days, deepening divisions within the party.

The controversy has reignited debate over Bal Thackeray's final days and the handling of his death. —*PTI*

BJP MOCKS ENGINEERING 'GYAAN'

RaGa lauds Indian firms in Colombia

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday praised Indian two-wheeler manufacturers Bajaj, Hero, and TVS for their success in Colombia, saying it "shows Indian companies can win with innovation, not cronyism."

At a seminar titled 'The Future is Today' at EIA University in Medellin, Gandhi said, "India has multiple religions, traditions, and languages, which require space. India is actually a conversation between all its people. The best method for creating that space is the democratic system."

He warned of internal risks, stating, "I am very optimistic about India, but at the same time, there are fault lines within the Indian structure. The single-biggest risk is the attack on democracy that is taking place in India. We cannot do what China does, which is to run an authoritarian system. Our design will just not accept that."

The remarks drew a sharp response from the BJP. National spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged, "He has become the flag-bearer of anti-India forces. Attempts have already been made in the past to create a North-South conflict."

He added, "Those in the Congress who are aware of the party falling into the clutches of dangerous foreign forces are committing treason. I appeal to those who are not aware of this to show due diligence and stop such leaders."

The BJP also took potshots at Gandhi saying engineers from Harley-Davidson to Toyota must be "beating their chests" after listening to his "amazing engineering gyaan".

Trivedi also criticised the Congress leader Udit Raj's comparison of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to 'a symbol of modern Ravan,' calling it a reflection of the party's frustration over being out of power for years. —*PTI*

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi poses for a photograph in Colombia. Rahul Gandhi praises the presence of Bajaj, Hero and TVS motorcycle brands in Colombia via his social media account on X PHOTO: PTI

The AAIB assured ALPA India it would be invited to future quarterly meetings PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

AAIB rejects pilots' request in AI crash probe

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has refused a request from the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) India to include a representative in the team investigating the June Air India crash that killed 260 people.

ALPA India, a pilots' body, said the AAIB cited government norms for its inability to involve pilots as subject matter experts in the ongoing probe. The crash involved Air India's Boeing 787-8 flight AI 171, which went down shortly after taking off from Ahmedabad en route to London Gatwick.

ALPA India president Sam Thomas met AAIB Director General GVG Yugandhar in New Delhi to discuss incorporating subject experts in accident investigations. While the discussion did not focus on specific details of the Air India crash due to the ongoing investigation, ALPA India emphasised that pilot perspectives could strengthen the investigative process.

The AAIB assured ALPA India it would be invited to future quarterly meetings.

The pilots' group said it remained hopeful that ongoing engagement would improve collaboration in aviation safety investigations and ensure critical pilot insights are considered in the future. —*PTI*

India's only mud volcano erupts after 20yrs

PORT BLAIR, 3 OCT

India's only mud volcano at Baratang in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands erupted on October 2 after lying dormant for over two decades, officials said. The eruption, accompanied by a loud explosion, created a 3–4 metre high mound and spread mud across 1,000 sq metres. Mud and smoke are still emerging. Tourist access has been suspended as a precaution, and the Forest Department has sealed off the area. Baratang, a popular destination 150 km from Port Blair, last witnessed such activity in 2005. Officials clarified this eruption is unrelated to the recent volcanic activity on Barren Island, located 140 km away. Safety measures for locals and tourists are in place. *—PTI*

Punjab police arrest man with grenades, ISI ties

CHANDIGARH, 3 OCT

Punjab Police on Friday arrested a man allegedly in contact with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and recovered two hand grenades from him. Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said Amritsar Rural Police apprehended Ravinder Singh, also known as Ravi, a resident of Tarn Taran. Initial investigation revealed that he had been in touch with ISI operatives and received the explosives from across the border. An FIR has been registered at Gharinda police station in Amritsar, and a probe is underway to uncover the wider network. Yadav reaffirmed that Punjab Police remain committed to dismantling terror modules, tackling organised crime and safeguarding peace and security across the state. *—PTI*

CCPA fines Drishti IAS Rs 5L for misleading claims

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has fined Drishti IAS (VDK Eduventures Pvt Ltd) Rs 5 lakh for publishing misleading advertisements about its UPSC Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2022 results. The institute claimed "216+ selections," but investigations revealed that 162 candidates (75 per cent) had only attended its free Interview Guidance Programme after independently clearing the Preliminary and Mains exams. Only 54 candidates had enrolled in paid courses. CCPA ruled that this concealment misled students and parents, breaching the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. This is the second penalty on Drishti IAS, which was fined Rs 3 lakh in 2024 for similar false claims. To date, the CCPA has penalised 26 coaching institutes over Rs 90.6 lakh for misleading advertisements. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Two dead, many hurt as SUV hits MP Durga procession

PANNA, 3 OCT

Two men were killed and more than a dozen others injured when a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) ploughed into a Durga idol immersion procession in Pawai, Panna district, Madhya Pradesh, on Thursday evening. The incident occurred around 8.30pm, officials said. Fourteen injured persons were rushed to Katni District Hospital, where two victims, Rakesh Patel, 36 and Purushottam Patel, 38, died during treatment. Civil surgeon Dr Yashwant Verma confirmed that several of the injured were children. Superintendent of Police Nivedita Naidu said the SUV driver was arrested and a probe launched. The injured were shifted to Katni, about 70km from Panna, due to its better medical facilities. *—PTI*

Week after riots, internet ban still on in Bareilly

The city turns into fortress, markets open amid weary calm

BAREILLY/BAHRAICH, 3 OCT

A week after communal violence broke out in Bareilly following Friday prayers, security has been significantly tightened across the city ahead of this week's congregational prayers. District Magistrate Avnish Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police Anurag Arya led patrols across sensitive areas, reassuring residents and overseeing heavy deployment of police and paramilitary forces.

The city has been divided into four super zones and eight zones for enhanced surveillance, with additional IPS officers brought in from neighbouring districts. Drones are also monitoring key locations, including Nau Mahal Masjid, Ala Hazrat Dargah, and Azam Nagar Masjid.

Markets reopened on Friday, though activity remained subdued. Shopkeepers stayed alert, prepared to shut down if tensions flared. Internet services remain suspended.

Police personnel stand guard in a sensitive area in view of Friday prayers, a week after clashes between police and locals, in Bareilly *PHOTO: PTI*

The violence on 26 September erupted after the cancellation of a protest over "I Love Muhammad" posters. Clashes left several injured. Police have lodged 10 FIRs and arrested over 70 people, including cleric Tauqeer Raza Khan and his aides.

Clerics from Ala Hazrat Dargah have urged people to maintain peace. Sajjadanashin Mufti Ahsan Miyan announced the cancellation of the annual Julus-e-Gausia procession, with a brief programme and prayer to be held instead on Saturday at Sailani Raza Chowk.

Meanwhile, in Bahraich, the district administration has invoked the National Security Act (NSA) against eight individuals jailed in connection with last year's communal riots. The violence, which broke out on 13 October 2024 during a Durga idol immersion procession, left one Hindu youth dead and several others injured.

- meanwhile, in Bahraich, the district administration has invoked the National Security Act against eight individuals jailed in last year's communal riots. Riots had broken out on 13 October 2024 during Durga idol immersion.

The accused, all of whom remain in custody, allegedly played key roles in the clashes, which also saw houses, shops, vehicles, and a hospital set ablaze. The NSA order, signed by District Magistrate Akshay Tripathi, aims to ensure peace ahead of this year's idol immersions, scheduled for Friday. *—PTI*

SCHOOLS, SHOPS REOPEN

Ladakh cannot afford violence: LG warns against stir

JAMMU, 3 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Surrounded by hostile borders, Ladakh cannot afford violence, Lt Governor (LG) Kavinder Gupta warned on Friday, vowing strict action against those trying to disturb peace in the Union Territory.

Gupta added that a magisterial probe has been ordered into the 24 September clashes in Leh that left four people dead and several injured. The situation, he noted, has since improved, with authorities lifting curfew restrictions on Thursday.

Shops, offices, and transport services are operating normally, schools up to Class 8 have reopened, and no fresh incidents have been reported. Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, prohibiting large gatherings, remains in force across Ladakh to prevent further unrest.

Warning against attempts to inflame tensions, the LG cited the circulation of deepfake videos and confirmed that several individuals who incited mob violence through provocative speeches have been detained. "There must be justice for innocents and punishment for culprits," he said.

He appealed to the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) to return to talks with the Centre.

Both groups, demanding statehood and Sixth Schedule safeguards for Ladakh, have decided to boycott the 6 October dialogue until a judicial probe is ordered and all detainees, including climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, are released. *—PTI*

North East India Festival Chief organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta and his manager Siddhartha Sharma are brought to the CID office inside a police vehicle in Guwahati *PHOTO: PTI*

2 bandmates of Zubeen sent to police custody

GUWAHATI, 3 OCT

A court in Assam on Friday remanded singer Zubeen Garg's band members Shekharjyoti Goswami and Amritprabha Mahanta to 14 days in police custody the musician's death.

Special DGP (CID) Munna Prasad Gupta said the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Kamrup Metropolitan district accepted the plea for extended interrogation. "The questioning of all four arrested accused is underway. I cannot share more at this stage," he told PTI.

Drummer Goswami and co-singer Mahanta were arrested on Thursday after days of questioning. Both were on the yacht in Singapore when Garg drowned while swimming on 19 September. Earlier, police invoked murder charges against Garg's manager Siddharth Sharma and festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, who were arrested in Delhi and are also in CID custody for 14 days.

Garg had travelled to Singapore to participate in the fourth edition of the NorthEast India Festival, organised by Mahanta's firm. Over 60 FIRs have been registered in Assam against Mahanta and several associates, including Garg's manager.

On the investigation front, Gupta said the final post-mortem report is awaited.

Separately, CID is investigating Mahanta for alleged financial crimes, including money laundering and benami property acquisitions. Raids on 25–26 September recovered multiple PAN cards, nearly 30 company and official seals, and documents linked to benami assets.

Meanwhile, a plea in Supreme Court seeks CBI or NIA probe. *—PTI*

Sabarimala gold row deepens, TDB seeks wider probe

T'PURAM, 3 OCT

The row over the gold-plated Dwarapalaka idols at Sabarimala intensified on Friday, sparking sharp exchanges between Kerala's ruling front and the opposition.

Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan called the episode 'theft of Sabarimala properties' and demanded stronger security for the shrine. Citing the 39-day delay in transporting the plates for replating in 2019, he urged a full investigation into temple inventories. He accused the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) and the government of violating rules by sending the plates outside and demanded the TDB president's resignation.

AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal described the affair as 'gold misappropriation,' questioning government involvement. Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala termed it a major security lapse and pressed for a court-monitored probe, while BJP's V Muraleedharan accused the government of looting temple gold and hurting devotees' sentiments.

CPI(M) leader EP Jayarajan warned that those responsible would face strict action.

Amid mounting criticism, TDB president PS Prasanth announced that the board will petition the Kerala High Court for a comprehensive inquiry into gold plating works at Sabarimala from 1998 to 2025.

He said the probe would cover all donations, including the 1998 offering by businessman Vijay Mallya. Prasanth defended the choice of Chennai-based Smart Creations, contracted in 2019, and clarified that Unnikrishnan Potty, the sponsor now under probe, was never authorised to handle the plates directly.

Meanwhile, the High Court has already ordered a probe after a Dwarapalaka pedestal was recovered from his relative's house. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

After ex-commando's arrest, 1,000 kg ganja seized in R'than

JAIPUR, 3 OCT

A day after the arrest of an ex-NSG commando for allegedly running a cannabis smuggling network, Rajasthan Police seized over 1,000 kg of ganja worth ₹5 crore in a separate operation, arresting two more traffickers.

The Anti-Gangster Task Force, in coordination with the Jhunjhunu District Special Team, launched Operation Prahar based on intelligence inputs about a consignment from Odisha headed to Rajasthan's Shekhawati region. The contraband was concealed in a hidden chamber behind the driver's seat of a container truck intercepted in Udaipurwati. Two traffickers, Subhash Gurjar and Pramod Gurjar of Sikar, were arrested. The consignment was allegedly meant for local drug lords Raju Pachlengi and Gokul, officials said. Earlier, the state's ATS and Anti-Narcotics Task Force arrested Bajrang Singh, a former NSG commando and 26/11 Mumbai attack responder, from Churu district. Singh, accused of running a narcotics racket smuggling ganja from Telangana and Odisha, was caught with 200 kg of the drug. Once in the BSF and NSG, he later tried to enter politics before turning to organised crime. *—PTI*

Akshay's daughter asked for nudes while online gaming

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar on Friday shared a disturbing personal incident involving his 13-year-old daughter to highlight rising cybercrime threats targeting children.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Cyber Awareness Month 2025 at the Maharashtra State Police Headquarters, Akshay recounted how his daughter was approached by a stranger while playing an online video game. The stranger, after confirming she was female, asked her to send nude photos. Disturbed, she immediately shut down the game and informed her mother. "This is how cybercrime begins," Akshay said, urging stronger digital safety measures for children. He appealed to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to introduce a weekly "cyber period" in schools for students from classes 7 to 10.

"Cybercrime is becoming bigger than street crime. It's crucial we educate our children early," he added. *—ANI*

TOTAL NOW AT 83

Snow leopard population in HP sees 62% rise in 4yrs: Survey

SHIMLA, 3 OCT

The snow leopard population in Himachal Pradesh's high-altitude tribal regions has increased by 62 per cent over the past four years, according to a new survey released by the Wildlife Wing of the state Forest Department.

The count has risen from 51 in 2021 to 83 in 2025, exceeding the previously estimated upper confidence limit of 73. The survey, conducted over the past year, excluded cubs, indicating a possible expansion of the species' habitat.

Released on 2 October to mark the beginning of Wildlife Week (2–8 October), the survey highlights successful conservation efforts and strong community involvement. Conducted over six sites across 26,000 sq km, the camera-trap-based survey identified snow leopards in Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnaur, and Pangi Valley, including areas beyond protected zones such as Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, Great Himalayan National Park, Sechu Tuan Nallah, and Asrang Wildlife Sanctuary.

The study also mapped the distribution of prey species such as blue sheep, Himalayan ibex, and musk deer, along with other high-altitude mammals like Himalayan wolves, brown bears, leopards, red foxes, and martens.

Notably, it reported the first official sighting of Pallas's cat in Kinnaur and the rediscovery of the woolly flying squirrel in Lahaul, underscoring the region's rich biodiversity.

Officials noted that the 2025 survey was completed in just one year, far quicker than the three years taken in 202, and offered a cost-effective, scalable model for future monitoring. Himachal is now the first Indian state to complete a second statewide snow leopard assessment. *—PTI*

Snow leopards are elusive, solitary big cats native to the high and cold mountain ranges of Central Asia, including Himalayas *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

- Conducted over six sites across 26,000 sq km, the camera-trap-based survey identified snow leopards in Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnaur, and Pangi Valley.

1 dead, 2 missing as rains lash Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, 3 OCT

Heavy rain lashing Odisha due to a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal disrupted normal life on Thursday, leaving one person dead and two others missing in landslides, officials said.

The depression crossed the Odisha coast near Gopalpur in Ganjam district on Thursday evening, intensifying downpours that are expected to continue till 8.30 am on Friday.

SP Jatindra Kumar Panda said a landslide buried one person under rubble in R Udaygiri limits of Gajapati district. Kartika Shabara, 70, and his son Rajib went missing in Rayagarh block. Rescue operations are underway, with roads connecting Rayagarh to Nuagarh and R Udaygiri cut off. A total of 24 tourists stranded at Mahendragiri Hills were rescued.

The IMD maintained red alerts for Puri, Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Kalahandi, and Kandhamal; orange for 16 districts; and yellow for seven western districts. *—PTI*

In 24 hours, Kanha Reserve loses tiger and 2 cubs

MANDLA, 3 OCT

In 24-hour span, the Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR) in Madhya Pradesh reported the deaths of three tigers, including the well-known 'Balaghat Male' and two female cubs. All were killed in territorial fights with other big cats, officials confirmed on Friday.

The carcass of the Balaghat Male, aged around 8 to 10 years and weighing between 170–180 kg, was discovered in the Mukhi range on Thursday. Post-mortem findings revealed fatal injuries to his trachea, likely inflicted during a confrontation with another tiger after he strayed into its territory from the buffer zone.

On the same day, two female cubs were found dead in the Kanha range, also believed to have been killed by an adult tiger.

Kanha, which spans parts of Mandla and Naxal-affected Balaghat districts, currently has 137 tigers, the highest in any reserve in Madhya Pradesh. According to the 2022 census, the state is home to 785 tigers, the largest population in India. *—PTI*

KASHMIR RLY TRIUMPH

Kashmir received its first automobile rake from Jammu on Friday, as 116 Maruti Suzuki vehicles arrived at Anantnag Goods Shed via train. This marks a major shift in vehicle transport to the Valley, which previously relied on the often-disrupted Jammu-Srinagar highway. Earlier, new cars were driven nearly 300 km from Jammu, often facing delays due to landslides and road closure. Maruti Suzuki is the first automaker to use Indian Railways for this route

PHOTO: PTI

DEPORTING MIGRANTS IS THE NEW GLOBAL NORM

In February, the Donald Trump administration deported 104 Indian immigrants, handcuffing and shackling them during the process. The deportees said they were treated inhumanely by US authorities ***PHOTO: PTI***

Under President Donald Trump, the United States dramatically expanded its detention and deportation of non-citizens. The Trump administration struck deals with multiple third countries to accept deportees, with reports indicating outreach to 58 nations. Some deportees have been re-detained on arrival in hotels, prisons, or camps, and in some cases, face further deportation.

Australia has followed a similar path. In September, the Labor government signed a secretive deal with Nauru, promising the tiny Micronesian nation A$2.5 billion over three decades to host deportees. This includes individuals with no prior connection to the country—mirroring the US model of third-country deportation.

In the UK, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government claimed to have scrapped the Conservatives' controversial Rwanda deportation plan. Yet in 2024, it removed nearly 35,000 people, an increase of 25 per cent from the previous year. Labour has proposed establishing "return hubs" in third countries, while the far-right Reform Party has promised mass deportations using military bases if it wins the next election.

Such policies are gaining traction in Europe too. In May, the European Commission proposed new laws allowing EU states to deport asylum seekers to third countries, even without prior ties.

Though deportation has long been used by states, as seen in Australia's origins as a British penal colony, the current surge reflects a growing authoritarianism within liberal democracies. This trend is marked by the increasing criminalisation of migration, eroded legal protections, and expanded offshore detention.

Criminalising migration

Over the past 30 years, securitised borders and restrictive laws have forced many fleeing war or persecution to seek refuge through unauthorised means. Governments have reframed asylum-seeking, from a protected human right, into a criminal act. Politicians now routinely brand people on the move as "illegal", laying the groundwork for both onshore and offshore detention.

In the US, UK and Australia, this language, once the domain of Right-wing tabloids, has seeped into mainstream politics and legislation. Migration expert Alison Mountz has described this trend as signalling "the death of asylum".

Racialised communities, even those with legal status, are also facing heightened surveillance and policing. In Australia, a 2014 law lowered the bar for visa cancellations, detaining individuals for even minor offences. Many were unable to return home and remained in detention for years, until a 2023 High Court ruling ordered their release. Despite having served their time, the media portrayed them as threats, prompting the Labor government to pass new legislation enabling their deportation to third countries.

In the US, mass deportation predates Trump. President Barack Obama earned the nickname "Deporter-in-Chief" for overseeing more than three million deportations. Though he claimed to prioritise "felons not families", Trump expanded the scope, targeting migrants with or without criminal records. Some US citizens were even swept up in the process.

Deportation has also become a tool to silence dissent. The Trump administration established new detention centres in prisons and military bases, including Guantánamo Bay, to meet his pledge to deport one million people in his first year.

EROSION OF LEGAL PROTECTIONS

In all three countries, deportation is increasingly carried out by stripping people of due process. In June, eight individuals were deported from the US to South Sudan without the opportunity to contest their removal. Following a failed legal challenge, three liberal US Supreme Court justices issued a rare rebuke:

"The government has made clear in word and deed that it feels itself unconstrained by law, free to deport anyone, anywhere without notice or an opportunity to be heard."

The UK Labour government expanded the "Deport Now, Appeal Later" scheme in August, raising the number of countries eligible for deportation without appeal from eight to 23. Meanwhile, Australia recently amended its Migration Act to remove principles of natural justice for those facing deportation.

These developments foster fear in migrant communities. Australian human rights lawyer Alison Battisson likened deportation to "a creeping death to the individuals and their families".

Worryingly, these state policies are also emboldening far-right groups. In both the UK and Australia, neo-Nazi factions have staged anti-migrant rallies, exploiting economic grievances, like lack of housing, jobs and healthcare, to scapegoat migrants.

THE FIGHT BACK

Despite this grim outlook, communities are organising. In Los Angeles, grassroots groups mobilised in response to aggressive Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids earlier this year, offering support to affected individuals. In July, the Detention Watch Network revived its Communities Not Cages coalition to fight back against detention. In the UK, Far-Right rallies outside asylum seeker hotels have been met with counter-protests advocating unity and compassion.

But the broader challenge remains: how can this growing grassroots resistance coalesce into a powerful coalition capable of confronting the expanding politics of exclusion? *—The Conversation*

SALAR ساہر

PepsiCo's challenge: Making colourful snacks with no dyes

PepsiCo began detecting consumer pushback against synthetic dyes over two decades ago ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

PepsiCo is facing a bold new challenge: keeping its iconic snacks and drinks vibrant and appealing without the artificial dyes that an increasing number of US consumers are rejecting.

The food and beverage giant, maker of brands like Gatorade, Cheetos, Doritos, Mountain Dew, and Cap'n Crunch, is accelerating a shift to natural colourings. As of now, around 40 per cent of its U.S. portfolio still contains synthetic dyes.

Though the company began this transition years ago, removing artificial colours entirely is expected to take several more. PepsiCo is still identifying suitable natural ingredients, conducting consumer testing, and awaiting US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for some alternatives.

It has not yet committed to meeting the Trump-era target of eliminating petroleum-based synthetic dyes by the end of 2026.

"We're not going to launch a product that the consumer's not going to enjoy," said Chris Coleman, Senior Director for Food R&D at PepsiCo North America. "We need to make sure the product is right."

Transitioning a product from artificial to natural colours can take two to three years. PepsiCo must find stable, safe ingredients that don't alter taste, ensure consistent supply, test formulas, and adapt packaging and production lines.

NATURAL COLOURS IN SNACK

Tostitos and Lay's are leading PepsiCo's shift. Naturally dyed tortilla and potato chips are expected on shelves later this year, with dips following in early 2026. While most products in these lines already use natural colours, exceptions like Tostitos Salsa Verde previously relied on a mix of synthetic dyes: Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Red 40, and Blue 1.

To replace them, PepsiCo is switching to carob powder, which offers a similar reddish-brown hue without affecting taste, after recipe tweaks. In the company's Frito-Lay food labs in Plano, Texas, researchers are experimenting with paprika and turmeric to replicate the bold reds and oranges found in Flamin' Hot Cheetos.

For beverages like Mountain Dew and Cherry 7Up, PepsiCo is testing purple sweet potatoes and different varieties of carrots.

"We eat with our eyes," said Damien Browne, VP of R&D for PepsiCo Beverages. "For products like Gatorade, people recognise them by colour more than name."

FROM QUIET DEMAND TO CONSUMER ROAR

PepsiCo's colour transformation mirrors a broader shift in consumer values. When Pepsi-Cola launched in 1902, it proudly advertised itself as free from artificial dyes, a differentiator at a time when competitors used harmful substances like arsenic and lead before these were banned in 1906.

Despite the long dominance of synthetic dyes, praised for their consistency, vibrancy and cost-effectiveness, PepsiCo began detecting consumer pushback over two decades ago. In 2002, it launched the Simply line of natural-ingredient snacks. Organic, dye-free Gatorade followed in 2016.

"We're looking for those little signals that will become humongous in the future," said Amanda Grzeda, PepsiCo's Senior Director of Global Sensory and Consumer Experience. Social media and growing scrutiny of ingredient lists have turned a whisper of concern into what she now calls "a roar."

Over half of respondents in a recent internal study said they're trying to reduce their intake of synthetic dyes.

FDA MOVES, BUT SLOWLY

While some US states, including West Virginia and Arizona, have banned artificial dyes in school meals, consumer demand remains the main driver of change.

"Consumers are definitely leading, and what we need is for regulators to catch up," said Browne. The FDA has responded by fast-tracking approvals for natural colourings. Since May, it has approved several new options, including a blue dye from algae and gardenia blue from a flowering evergreen.

Meanwhile, it's clamping down on problematic synthetic dyes. Red 3 was banned in January after links to cancer in lab animals, and a ban on the long-unused Orange B was proposed in September. Still, six synthetic dyes—like Red 40, found in nearly 26,000 US products, remain FDA-approved despite studies suggesting possible behavioural impacts in children.

Even though synthetic dyes pass safety standards, Grzeda noted that public perception matters. "We could just blindly follow the science, but that would put us at odds with what our consumers believe," she said.

BALANCING COLOUR, TASTE AND COST

For PepsiCo, the biggest challenge may be ensuring consumers don't feel forced to choose between natural colours and the familiar taste and texture of their favourite snacks.

In West Virginia, small business owner Susan Mazur-Stommen recently tried a packet of Simply Cheetos Puffs. She found their texture noticeably different and said the muted colour made them less appetising. While she supports the removal of petroleum-based dyes in principle, it's not a top priority for her. "What I'm looking for is the original formulation," she said.Cost is another factor. As natural dye ingredients are often more expensive, prices can rise. According to NIQ data, unit sales of products marketed as free from artificial dyes fell sharply in 2023 amid inflationary pressures.

Still, PepsiCo is aiming to satisfy both the health-conscious and the loyalist. "That's where it requires deep science and ingredients and magic," Grzeda said.

With its vast product portfolio and global reach, PepsiCo's dye transition may take years, but it could help redefine what colourful really means in the world of food and drink. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

16-year-old becomes 1st Muslim to dance on Kerala's Kalamandalam stage

- Sabri's journey to the stage began with encouragement from her father, Nizam Ammas, a photographer from Kollam. "It is a joyous occasion for our family," he said in a video message. "She has successfully achieved her dream to perform Kathakali on the stage of the Kerala Kalamandalam."

On Thursday, 16-year-old Sabri stepped onto the hallowed stage of Kerala Kalamandalam, the state's premier classical arts institution, and created history. Performing her arangettam, or debut performance, in the traditional Krishna vesham purappadu, she became the first Muslim woman to perform Kathakali in the 95-year history of the institution.

Her performance not only marked the culmination of years of training but also fulfilled a long-cherished personal dream and a vision held by one of Kalamandalam's revered gurus.

"It was an unforgettable experience," said Sabri after her performance, held on Vijayadashami. "Dance is my passion, and I am very happy I could achieve my dream today."

Sabri's journey to the stage began with encouragement from her father, Nizam Ammas, a photographer from Kollam. "It is a joyous occasion for our family," he said in a video message. "She has successfully achieved her dream to perform Kathakali on the stage of the Kerala Kalamandalam."

Kalamandalam, a deemed university for classical performing arts founded in 1930 by poet Vallathol Narayana Menon and Mukundaraja, has long been a guardian of Kerala's rich cultural traditions. It is renowned for nurturing generations of artistes in Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, and Koodiyattam. Until recently, however, it remained largely closed to female students and non-Hindus.

Sabri's entry into the institution was made possible in 2023 through the support of celebrated Kathakali artist and teacher, Kalamandalam Gopi. He believed a Muslim girl should be trained in the art and introduced her to the first mudras or gestures. She continued her studies under Kalamandalam Anil Kumar for three years.

"Sabri is attentive and diligent in following instructions," Anil Kumar said. "She performed her arangettam very nicely. But she still has a long way to go. What she has completed is just the initial phase. More challenging dance routines await her."

Sabri is part of the third batch of girls to be admitted since Kalamandalam opened its doors to female students in 2021. While she is the first Muslim woman to learn Kathakali at the institution, she is not the first person from a minority community. Renowned Kathakali dancer Kalamandalam John, a Christian, is an alumnus, and the legendary Kathakali singer Kalamandalam Hyderali, a Muslim, made a lasting impact on the art form with his powerful voice before his untimely death in 2006.

Sabri's entry into the institution was made possible in 2023 through the support of celebrated Kathakali artiste and teacher, Kalamandalam Gopi ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

Sabri's arangettam featured the Krishna vesham purappadu, a nearly 40-minute-long presentation that introduces the character of Lord Krishna through graceful movements accompanied by percussion and singing. It is a visually striking segment that captures the divine and playful essence of Krishna before the narrative unfolds.

"The weight of the costume was a bit much, as it was the first time I wore it," Sabri said. "But once I was on stage, everything went smoothly."

She performed the routine alongside four other female classmates, taking the stage around 8 pm after several hours of makeup and costume preparation. The elaborate process included applying the traditional blue makeup associated with Krishna and donning the ornate Kathakali costume.

Her father, who had observed his daughter's early fascination with the colours and costumes of dance while accompanying him on photography assignments, said he was not surprised when she showed interest in learning the art.

"She used to be curious about the makeup and performances. When I asked her if she would like to study Kathakali, she enthusiastically agreed," he recalled.

When Kalamandalam announced in 2021 that it would begin admitting girls, Nizam took note. Sabri was in class 6 at the time and the institution only accepts students from class 8 onwards. She eventually applied in 2023 and was admitted with the support of Kalamandalam Gopi.

The significance of Sabri's performance goes beyond personal achievement. Her debut is a symbol of slow but meaningful change in a traditional space that has long upheld the legacy of male and Hindu dominance in Kathakali. It also reflects the vision of an inclusive future where the boundaries of religion and gender no longer limit participation in cultural heritage.

Kerala Kalamandalam, known for its strict adherence to tradition, is also adapting. In recent years, it has taken steps to become more inclusive, with female and non-Hindu students slowly making their mark.

"Sabri's performance was more than a dance," Anil Kumar said. "It was a moment of transformation."

As she looks forward to more years of training and performances, Sabri's story is already inspiring others. Her presence on the Kalamandalam stage has made history, not just for her community, but for Kerala's cultural landscape.

"It was great," her proud father said, watching his daughter take confident steps in an art form that once seemed beyond reach. *—PTI*

Indonesian school collapse: 3 more bodies found

SIDOARJO, 3 OCT

Rescuers in Sidoarjo, Indonesia, have recovered three more bodies from the ruins of the collapsed al Khoziny Islamic boarding school, raising the confirmed death toll to eight. More than 50 students remain missing, while over 100 have been reported injured. The century-old building collapsed on Monday while two additional floors were being constructed without official permits. At the time, hundreds of boys aged 12 to 19 were praying in the hall when the structure gave way. Female students, in a separate section, escaped unhurt. Initial rescue operations were carried out manually, but heavy excavators are now being used as hopes of finding survivors fade. Officials expect recovery efforts to conclude by Saturday. *—PTI*

Massive fire breaks out at oil refinery near LA

EL SEGUNDO, 3 OCT

A major fire erupted late Thursday at Chevron's El Segundo oil refinery near Los Angeles, sending flames high into the night sky. Authorities urged residents to stay indoors but confirmed there was no immediate threat to public safety and no evacuations were ordered. Chevron said all personnel were safe and accounted for, with monitoring systems showing the blaze was contained within the facility's boundary. The cause of the fire has not yet been disclosed. Los Angeles County fire crews managed to confine the flames to one section of the refinery, which processes up to 2,90,000 barrels of crude oil daily. Officials confirmed there was no impact on nearby Los Angeles International Airport. *—PTI*

Church of England appoints 1st woman Archbishop

LONDON, 3 OCT

The Church of England has made history with the appointment of Bishop Sarah Mullally as the first female Archbishop of Canterbury. Her selection, following the resignation of Reverend Justin Welby, was formally approved by King Charles III. Currently the Bishop of London and a former Chief Nursing Officer for England, 63-year-old Mullally will lead 85 million Anglicans worldwide. Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed her appointment, highlighting the Church's significance in national life. Mullally described the role as a "huge responsibility" and expressed her desire to encourage the Church to "grow in confidence in the Gospel." She will legally become the 106th Archbishop following her Confirmation of Election in January, 2026.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Taylor Swift drops new album, crashes Spotify

NEW YORK, 3 OCT

Taylor Swift's much awaited 12th studio album, 'The Life of a Showgirl', was released at midnight on Friday, breaking records and briefly crashing Spotify. The record broke Spotify's all-time presave record, surpassing her previous album 'The Tortured Poets Department'. Within minutes of its release, the global rush of fans overwhelmed Spotify, causing brief outages for users in several countries before services stabilised. Swift described the 13-track album as a "self-portrait", created with long-time collaborators Max Martin and Shellback. Fans quickly pushed the songs to trending charts once streaming resumed. With lyrics reflecting a lighter, more joyful chapter in her life, Swift's Showgirl reinforces her dominance in contemporary pop, blending commercial power with personal storytelling. *—Agencies*

World protests as Israel intercepts last flotilla boat

Protesters around the globe demand release of the activists

JERUSALEM, 3 OCT

Israeli forces intercepted on Friday the last boat from an international flotilla trying to break Israel's sea blockade of war-ravaged Gaza as cities around the world erupted into more protests against Israeli actions in Gaza and the arrests of some 450 activists who were on the boats.

The last boat, Marinette, had been trailing behind the rest of the vessels and was still sailing on to the Palestinian territory in the early hours of Friday, a day after the Israeli navy stormed 41 other boats in the Global Sumud Flotilla and detained the activists.

Israel's interceptions started on Wednesday night and continued through Thursday as boat by boat was stopped off Gaza's shore and the activists — including Greta Thunberg, Nelson Mandela's grandson Mandla Mandela and several European lawmakers — were detained.

Protests broke out across the world, demanding the immediate release of the activists and an end to Israel's blockade on Gaza. *—Agencies*

A fireworks explodes above police during protests in Bologna, Italy, after the Global Sumud Flotilla carrying aid to Gaza was intercepted by Israel *PHOTO: PTI*

FRANCE

In Paris, which has been protesting against the government and budget cuts called by trade unions, the demonstrations turned towards Gaza. Thousands protesters chanted "free the flotilla, free Palestine". The event was organised by France's Leftist France Unbowed party (LFI). Four lawmakers of the party were part of the flotilla.

ITALY

In Milan, 20,000 people marched through the city centre, and in Rome, local authorities reported 10,000 people attended a rally that started from the Colosseum and reached Porta San Paolo. In Bologna, clashes broke out as riot police used tear gas against demonstrators. Twenty-two Italian citizens were part of the flotilla.

SOUTH AFRICA

Protests erupted in Cape Town near several healthcare facilities. Several prominent figures were aboard the flotilla, including Mandela, writer and cultural activist Zukiswa Wanner and activist Reaaz Moola among others.

OTHER NATIONS

Protests occurred in Berlin, The Hague, Tunis, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Sydney, Istanbul, Karachi, Buenos Aires and Mexico City. In Brussels, about 3,000 people gathered outside the European Parliament, urging the EU to "break the siege".

UK

Forty people were arrested at protest near Downing Street in London, with the Metropolitan Police calling on protesters planning further marches over the weekend to "cancel their plans" owing to the attack at a synagogue in Manchester. UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood called it "fundamentally un-British".

SPAIN

In Barcelona, about 15,000 demonstrators marched, chanting "Gaza, you are not alone," "Boycott Israel," and "Freedom for Palestine". Riot police reportedly clashed with protesters. Former Barcelona mayor Ada Colau was part of the flotilla.

Two-states a must for Gaza peace plan: Putin

MOSCOW, 3 SEPT

Russian President Vladmir Putin said that Russia was ready to support US President Donald Trump's peace plan for Gaza, provided that it included a two-state solution.

"In general, Russia is prepared to support it," he said. "Russia has always ... advocated the creation of two states – both Israel and a Palestinian state. And this is the key to a final solution to the conflict."

He also fired back Trump's comment that Moscow was a "paper tiger" over its prolonged war against Ukraine, suggesting instead that NATO might be one. Trump had said that Russia was a paper tiger because it was unable to win the Ukraine war despite its military might.

"Well if we are fighting with the entire NATO bloc, we are moving, advancing, and we feel confident, and we are a 'paper tiger', then what is NATO itself?" Putin said in his remarks at the Valdai Discussion Club, a forum of Russia experts, in the city of Sochi.

> **Well if we are fighting with the entire NATO bloc, we are moving, advancing, and we feel confident, and we are a 'paper tiger', then what is NATO**
>
> -Vladimir Putin, Russian President

Putin also warned the US against supplying Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine, saying that it would trigger a dangerous new escalation.

Putin also scoffed at European leader's "hysteria", and asked them to "get some rest" and fix their internal issues. Yet, Putin cautioned Europe over its military build-up, which has increased after Russian drones violated the airspaces of Poland, Estonia and Romania.

"We are closely monitoring the escalating militarisation," he said. "I think no one doubts that such measures will force Russia to act." *—Salar News*

Amid shutdown, Don halts $2B funds

WASHINGTON, 3 SEPT

The Trump administration has announced it will withhold £2.1 billion for infrastructure projects in Chicago, amid ongoing funding disputes during the government shutdown. White House budget director Russ Vought confirmed that the suspension pertains to a long-awaited plan to extend the city's Red Line train.

Vought stated on social media that the funding was "put on hold to ensure that funding is not flowing via race-based contracting." This pause follows an earlier announcement involving New York, where £18 billion for infrastructure projects, including a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River, is also being withheld.

The loss of funds represents a significant blow to Chicago's transportation initiatives. The Red Line extension aims to introduce four new train stops on the South Side, enhancing access for disadvantaged communities. Additionally, a broader modernisation project for the Red and Purple lines is also being targeted.

- White House budget director Russ Vought said that the suspension pertains to a long-awaited plan to extend Chicago's Red Line train as Trump applies pressure to Democratic states

In New York, Trump's Transportation Department reported that it had been reviewing for any "unconstitutional practices" in these projects but that the government shutdown had forced staff furloughs. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer condemned the funding freeze, asserting, "Obstructing these projects is stupid and counterproductive." *—PTI*

ONE OF THE TWO UK SYNAGOGUE VICTIMS WAS LIKELY SHOT BY COPS

MANCHESTER, 3 OCT

One of two men killed in a car and knife attack at a Manchester synagogue may have died from a police bullet as worshippers tried to prevent the assailant's entry, authorities revealed. Adrian Daulby, 53, and Melvin Cravitz, 66, were fatally injured at the Heaton Park Congregation Synagogue during Yom Kippur on Thursday. Three others remain in serious condition.

Police chief Stephen Watson stated that a forensic examination indicated one victim sustained a gunshot wound and that the attacker, Jihad Al-Shamie, 35, was not armed with a gun. "This injury may sadly have been sustained as a tragic and unforeseen consequence" of police actions, Watson said.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood noted that Al-Shamie was not previously known to counter-terrorism agencies. The attack, described as a terrorist act, has prompted increased police presence in Manchester. *—PTI*

PRINCE WILLIAM SUGGESTS POTENTIAL CHANGES TO MONARCHY

LONDON, 3 OCT

In a candid interview for the travel documentary 'The Reluctant Traveller,' Prince William hinted at future adjustments to the British monarchy when he eventually succeeds his father, King Charles III. During filming at Windsor Castle, Canadian actor Eugene Levy asked if the monarchy would shift direction under his reign.

William replied, "I think it's safe to say that change is on my agenda. Change for good, and I embrace that and I enjoy that change." He emphasised that while he supports necessary changes, they will not be overly radical.

He expressed a desire to create a monarchy his eldest son, Prince George, can be proud of, adding, "I hope we don't go back to some of the practices in the past that Harry and I grew up in."

William also spoke about feeling "overwhelmed" by family issues, particularly referencing the health struggles of his wife, Kate, and father, Charles. *—PTI*

REASON UNKNOWN

Japan may run out of its fav beer after cyberattack

TOKYO, 3 OCT

Japan could soon run out of its most popular beer, after a devastating cyberattack on its biggest brewer that has brought its domestic factories to a halt.

Asahi Group Holdings, a major Japanese beverage producer said it was hit by a cyberattack that left its operations disrupted for the fifth day on Friday. Japanese media reported that stocks of the company's popular beer and other beverages are running low in stores.

Asahi said its computer systems were hit by a cyberattack on Monday, creating glitches that have affected orders, shipments and a customer call centre in Japan. Overseas systems were not affected.

A company spokeswoman said on Friday that the problem had still not been fixed, though some emergency shipments were made on Wednesday, with employees entering information into computer systems manually.

The cause and motive of the attacks were still under investigation, the spokeswoman said.

Popular Japanese convenience store chains, including FamilyMart and Lawson, say they are running out of Asahi products, which also include food items and bottled tea.

Asahi has temporarily suspended orders and shipments of its products with "no prospect of resumption", FamilyMart said in a statement.

It's unclear when the system will be back up and running, Asahi said. The company has cancelled events and is delaying the launch of products.

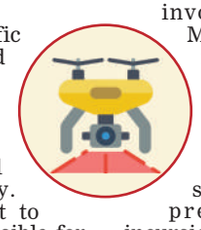
Asahi, founded in 1949, makes beer, including its popular Super Dry rice lager and beverages, including cider and juices, and baby food, and other products. *—PTI*

Asahi Group Holding experience a cyberattack on Monday *PHOTO: X*

Now, Munich Airport disrupted by drones

MUNICH, 3 OCT

Munich Airport was temporarily closed late Thursday following multiple drone sightings in the surrounding airspace, highlighting growing security concerns over critical European infrastructure.



Germany's air traffic control first restricted flights shortly after 10pm before halting operations entirely. Normal services resumed at 5am local time on Friday. Authorities have yet to identify those responsible for the overflights.

The disruption affected 17 departing flights, stranding nearly 3,000 passengers, while 15 arriving aircraft were diverted to other airports, including one in Vienna, Austria. Stranded travellers were accommodated with cots, blankets, refreshments, or transported to nearby hotels.

Officials say the incident is part of a wider pattern of drone activity across EU member countries. European authorities have raised concerns over potential Russian involvement, though Moscow has denied any role. Unmanned aerial vehicle threats were a major topic at a recent EU summit in Copenhagen, where leaders pledged to strengthen measures to prevent such incursions.

The episode underscores the vulnerability of Europe's aviation and critical infrastructure to unauthorised drone operations, prompting renewed calls for tighter security protocols and coordinated airspace monitoring. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold snaps 5-day record rally; falls to Rs 1,20,600/10g

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Gold prices fell by Rs 500 to Rs 1,20,600 per 10g in the national capital on Friday, ending a five-day record-extending rally, as investors booked profits and a slight recovery in the US dollar weighed on sentiment. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also retreated from its peak, slipping Rs 500 to Rs 1,20,000 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at Rs 1,20,500 per 10g in the previous trading session. Silver prices also eased by Rs 500 to Rs 1,50,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). Meanwhile, spot silver in the overseas markets rose nearly 1 per cent to USD 47.34 per ounce after hitting a high of USD 48.10 per ounce on Thursday. —*PTI*

Rupee falls by 7P, closes at 88.78 against USD

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

The rupee depreciated 7 paise to close at 88.78 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, near its all-time low level, on dollar demand from importers and persistent foreign fund outflows. Forex traders said the USD/INR pair is hovering around its all-time low level, weighed down by trade tensions and global uncertainties. Moreover, persistent foreign fund outflows and the ongoing US visa fee hike issue also dragged down the domestic unit. At the interbank foreign exchange, rupee opened at 88.68 against the US dollar and touched an intraday low of 88.85 and finally settled for the day at 88.78 (provisional). Meanwhile, the dollar index was trading at 97.78, lower by 0.06 per cent, amid US government shutdown. —*PTI*

L&T secures ₹5,000-10,000 cr IT project in B'luru

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Larsen & Toubro's (L&T) Buildings & Factories division has secured major domestic contracts valued between Rs 5,000 crore and 10,000 crore. The infrastructure giant announced that it will construct one of India's largest proposed IT parks in Bengaluru, spanning 5.9 million sq ft. The project will be delivered on a lump sum turnkey basis in two phases. L&T said the contract highlights its strong record in executing large-scale, complex office projects within strict timelines.In addition, the B&F vertical has bagged an order to build a mixed-use development in Mumbai, with a scheduled completion period of 45 months. The company did not disclose the identity of the clients for either project in its regulatory filing. —*PTI*

Zomato delivery partners to get retirement benefits

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Zomato, in partnership with HDFC Pension, has launched the NPS Platform Workers Model to provide retirement benefits to delivery partners. The initiative, formally introduced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, aims to address the absence of formal savings options for gig workers. Zomato plans to help more than 1,00,000 delivery partners open National Pension System (NPS) accounts by 2025. Already, over 30,000 partners have generated Permanent Retirement Account Numbers (PRANs) within days of integration. The scheme offers workers long-term financial security through a lump sum and monthly pension at retirement, along with flexibility for small, regular contributions. Benefits are portable, enabling workers to carry accounts through career changes. Digital onboarding with eKYC ensures a smooth, hassle-free process. —*PTI*

Mkts extend gains on 2nd day as metal shares soar

Sensex climbs 224 points, while Nifty surges 58 points

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty advanced for the second straight session on Friday, powered by buying in metal and telecom stocks following a firm trend in global markets.

After swinging between gains and losses for most of the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 223.86 points, or 0.28 per cent, to settle at 81,207.17. During the day, the index touched a high of 81,251.99 and a low of 80,649.57, gyrating 602.42 points.

As many as 2,710 stocks advanced while 1,490 declined and 139 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty edged higher by 57.95 points, or 0.23 per cent, to 24,894.25.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark climbed 780.71 points or 0.97 per cent, and the Nifty went up by 24,894.25 points or 0.97 per cent.

From the Sensex firms, Tata Steel climbed the most by 3.40 per cent, followed by Power Grid, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Bharat Electronics and Bharti Airtel.

As many as 2,710 stocks advanced while 1,490 declined and 139 remained unchanged on the BSE PHOTO: PTI

In contrast, Tech Mahindra, Maruti, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finserv were among the major laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.09 per cent, and the midcap index went up by 0.78 per cent.

The BSE metal index jumped 1.85 per cent, with companies, such as Lloyds Metals and Energy surging 6.18 per cent, National Aluminium Company (3.10 per cent), and Jindal Stainless (2.87 per cent).

Among other sectoral indices, industrials jumped 1.28 per cent, telecommunication (1.16 per cent), consumer durables (1.15 per cent), commodities (1.12 per cent), capital goods (1.02 per cent) and utilities (0.95 per cent).

Realty and healthcare were the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,605.20 crore on Wednesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 2,916.14 crore, according to exchange data.

Equity markets were closed on Thursday for Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti and Dussehra. —*PTI*

Private sector investments gaining traction in India: FM

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Friday that private sector investment in India is starting to gain traction, particularly with a renewed interest in public-private partnership (PPP) projects.

Speaking at the Kautilya Economic Conclave 2025, she noted that the public expenditure has risen significantly over the past five years and reaffirmed the government's ongoing commitment to capital expenditure (capex).

"In the last five years, the (capex) numbers have gone significantly higher each year. The commitment for capital expenditure has only grown and even plateaued. That commitment continues," Sitharaman stated in response to queries regarding the government's allocation for GDP investment annually.

To maintain the economic momentum during the Covid19 pandemic, the Narendra Modi-led government had ramped up capital expenditure through infrastructure investments. For the fiscal year 2025-26 (April-March), the government has set an ambitious capital expenditure target of Rs 11.21 lakh crore.

In the first four months of the current fiscal, capital expenditure has surged by 33 per cent year-on-year, total-

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman delivers the inaugural address at the Kautilya Economic Conclave 2025, in New Delhi, on Friday PHOTO: PTI

INCOME MANIPULATION

Adani Cement entity ACC fined Rs 23 cr

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Income Tax (I-T) department has imposed two separate fines on ACC Ltd, totalling Rs 23.07 crore, which will be contested by the Adani Group firm before the appellate authorities.

The I-T department has slapped a penalty of Rs 14.22 crore allegedly "for furnishing of inaccurate particulars of income" for Assessment Year 2015-16.

The department has also levied a penalty amounting to Rs 8.85 crore "for under-reporting of income" for Assessment Year 2018-19.

"The company will be contesting both orders by filing appeals before the Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals) within the prescribed timelines and, in parallel, will seek a stay on the penalty demands raised under the respective orders," ACC said in regulator filings on Thursday.

The company received these two demands on 1 October, 2025, and said that these penalties will have no impact on financial activity.

ACC is a subsidiary of Ambuja Cement, the Adani Cement entity, which owns over 50 per cent of the company. Both the I-T department demands are for the period before it became part of the Billionaire Gautam Adani-led group.

In September 2022, Adani Group acquired Ambuja Cements and its subsidiary ACC Ltd from Switzerland's Holcim Group in a USD 6.4 billion deal. —*PTI*

Centre lifts export ban on de-oiled rice bran after 2-yr ban

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Indian government has announced the lifting of the export ban on de-oiled rice bran, a key ingredient in the cattle feed industry. The decision aims to support domestic processors and boost farmers' incomes, following appeals from the Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA) of India.

In a notification, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) stated, "The export policy of de-oiled rice bran is hereby amended from prohibited to free with immediate effect."

The ban was originally imposed last year.

Additionally, the DGFT has specified that exports of various agricultural commodities—including dairy products, onions, potatoes, certain vegetables, rice, and wheat—to Bhutan will be exempt from restrictions and prohibitions, effective immediately and until further notice.

These exemptions also include other products such as tea, soybean oil, groundnut oil, palm oil, animal and vegetable fats and oils, cane or beet sugar, and salt.

Furthermore, the DGFT announced that the export of 100 tonnes of Wheat seed (DWR-162) from the University of Dharwad to Indonesia through National Co-operative Exports Limited (NCEL), via Mangalore sea port, has been permitted as a one-time exemption. This decision is subject to certification by the University of Dharwad or the Department of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka.

Presently, there are still export restrictions on commodities like wheat. —*PTI*

The decision aims to support domestic processors and boost farmers' incomes, following appeals from the SEA of India PHOTO: AI

Goyal, S'pore PM hold talk strategic ties

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goyal** met with Singaporean Prime Minister **Lawrence Wong** to bolster the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Singapore.

Goyal expressed his enthusiasm about the meeting, stating, "Delighted to call on HE @LawrenceWongST, Prime Minister of Singapore. Discussions reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen our comprehensive strategic partnership, building on the strong momentum and vast potential for future growth."

During his visit, Goyal also engaged with Chin Yau Seng, the CEO of Singapore Airlines Engineering Company, to discuss enhancing cooperation in India-Singapore aviation Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) sectors. Further discussions took place with CapitaLand Investment executives, Lee Chee Koon and Manohar Khiatani, focusing on sustainable urban development and infrastructure expansion in India, particularly in logistics, warehousing, and data centres.

Goyal emphasised that these conversations are vital for driving India's growth story through strategic collaboration across multiple sectors, highlighting both nations' commitment to long-term economic growth. —*ANI*

Households may see price pressure relief

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) September 2025 Inflation Expectations Survey of Households (IESH) has signalled an easing of inflationary pressures across key product groups, including food, non-food, housing, and services.

The bi-monthly survey, conducted across 19 major cities with 6,082 responses, found that perceptions of current inflation edged up slightly by 20 basis points to 7.4 per cent.

However, expectations for the future showed clear moderation.

Three-month ahead inflation expectations fell by 20 basis points to 8.1 per cent, while one-year ahead expectations declined by 30 basis points to 8.7 per cent.

The proportion of households expecting price rises over both horizons also dropped compared with the previous survey.

Product-wise, 77.8 per cent of respondents expected prices to increase over three months, down from 79.5 per cent earlier PHOTO: PTI

Product-wise, 77.8 per cent of respondents expected prices to increase over three months, down from 79.5 per cent earlier.

Similarly, 86.8 per cent foresaw higher prices over a year, lower than 88.1 per cent previously.

Perceptions varied across groups: younger respondents (under 25) reported the lowest current inflation at 7.0 per cent, while those above 60 perceived 7.9 per cent. Kolkata registered the highest city-level reading at 10.5 per cent. —*ANI*

HC rejects Anil Ambani's plea against SBI fraud case

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

The Bombay High Court on Friday dismissed a petition filed by industrialist Anil Ambani challenging the State Bank of India's (SBI) decision classifying his and Reliance Communications' accounts as fraud.

A bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela Gokhale said there was no merit in the plea.

A detailed copy of the judgement was not available immediately.

The SBI had last year classified the accounts as fraud, alleging misappropriation of funds by entering into transactions that violated the terms of loans extended by it.

Ambani moved the HC, arguing that the bank had not followed the principles of natural justice as it did not grant him a hearing.

Certain documents, based on which the classification orders were passed, were not provided to him initially, and furnished only after six months, the petition claimed.

The bank this year lodged a complaint with the CBI, which searched premises linked to Reliance Communications and Ambani's residence.

The CBI said it had registered a complaint after the State Bank of India claimed a loss of Rs 2,929.05 crore resulting from alleged misappropriation by Reliance Communications and Anil Ambani. —*PTI*

DELAYS AFFECT 74,381 FLYERS

Domestic air traffic falls to 1.29 cr in August

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Domestic airlines flew 1.29 crore passengers in August, lower than 1.31 crore people carried by them in the year-ago period, according to the latest official data.

However, the traffic quantum was higher in August compared to July, when it stood at 1.26 crore.

IndiGo's domestic market fell to 64.2 per cent in August against 65.2 per cent in July, while that of Air India Group -- comprising Air India and Air India Express -- rose to 27.3 per cent from 26.2 per cent during the same period.

In August, the passenger number stood at 1.29 crore, lower than 1.31 crore recorded in the same period a year ago.

A total of 1,407 passenger-related complaints were received by the scheduled domestic airlines, and the number of complaints per 10,000 passengers carried in August was around 1.09.

As per the DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) data, a total of 74,381 passengers were affected due to flight delays, and airlines shelled out Rs 1.18 crore towards facilitation in August.

As many as 36,362 passengers were impacted by flight cancellations, with airlines spending Rs 64.51 lakh for compensation and facilities.

DGCA said a total of 705 passengers were denied boarding, and carriers spent Rs 24.52 lakh towards compensation and facilities.

In terms of On-Time Performance in August, IndiGo topped the list with 90.6 per cent, followed by Akasa Air (87 per cent), Air India Group (84.5 per cent), SpiceJet (68.2 per cent) and Alliance Air (55.2 per cent).

OTP is computed for six metro airports -- Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata. —*PTI*

As many as 36,362 passengers were impacted by flight cancellations, with airlines spending Rs 64.51 lakh for compensation and facilities PHOTO: AI

WeWork IPO gets 4% subscription on Day 1

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The initial public offering (IPO) of co-working space operator WeWork India Management Ltd received 4 per cent subscription on the first day of share sale on Friday.

The IPO received bids for 11,10,440 shares against 2,54,89,748 shares on offer, as per NSE data.

The quota for retail individual investors (RIIs) got subscribed 14 per cent, while the categories for qualified institutional buyers and non-institutional investors received 2 per cent subscription each.

The company's Rs 3,000-crore issue will conclude on 7 October. The price band has been fixed at Rs 615-648 per share, valuing the company around Rs 8,685 crore at the upper end. The IPO, entirely an offer for sale of up to 4.63 crore equity shares, will see promoter group entity Embassy Buildcon LLP and investor 1 Ariel Way Tenant Ltd (part of WeWork Global) divest their stakes.

Currently, Embassy Group holds about 76.21 per cent in WeWork India, while WeWork Global owns 23.45 per cent.

Since the issue is an OFS, WeWork India will not receive any proceeds from the issue and the funds will go entirely to selling shareholders.

In its draft papers, WeWork India stated that the objective of the offer is to achieve the benefits of listing its equity shares on the stock exchanges. —*PTI*

WORDS of WISDOM

"Growing up, I didn't want to be treated as less. Cerebral palsy shapes who I am - it doesn't define my limits. I hope every kid with cerebral palsy sees that their dreams are valid

—JAYDIN BLACKWELL

American Paralympic champion sprinter

Rahul & Jadeja's tons give India dominance over WI

India reach 448/5 at stumps on Day 2, lead by 286 runs

AHMEDABAD, 3 OCT

KL Rahul, Dhruv Jurel, and Ravindra Jadeja smashed centuries as India dominated the opening Test against the West Indies at the Narendra Modi Stadium. At stumps on day two, India stood at 448 for 5, leading by 286 runs and firmly in control of the match.

Rahul, scoring his 11th Test hundred and his first home century since 2016, made 100 off 197 balls. His steady innings helped erase the deficit as he shared a 98-run partnership with Shubman Gill, who fell soon after reaching his fifty. Rahul's celebration was a heartfelt tribute to his infant daughter.

Jurel, in only his sixth Test, scored a stylish maiden century (125 off 210 balls), while Jadeja followed with his sixth Test hundred (104 off 178 balls). Their aggressive yet composed approach featured 45 boundaries and eight sixes between them, including five sixes from Jadeja, who celebrated with his trademark sword salute.

The pair added a commanding 206 runs for the fifth wicket, narrowly missing the record 214-run fifth-wicket stand by VVS Laxman and Sachin Tendulkar against the West Indies in 2002. West Indies' bowling lacked intensity, and the spinners struggled to contain the hosts despite gaining some turn and bounce from the rough patches on the pitch. Jurel was eventually dismissed caught behind off debutant Khary Pierre, who claimed his maiden Test wicket.

India's traditional batting approach piled immense pressure on the visitors, who remained disciplined but unable to make breakthroughs. With a massive lead and spinners finding assistance, India looks set to push for victory by day three, consolidating their World Test Championship position. —*PTI*

India s Dhruv Jurel celebrates his century on day two of the first test cricket match between India and West Indies, at the Narendra Modi Stadium, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat **PHOTO:PTI**

- West Indies' bowling lacked intensity, and the spinners struggled to contain the hosts despite gaining some turn and bounce from the rough patches on the pitch

Senthilkumar bows out in Charlottesville

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

India's Velavan Senthilkumar and Veer Chotrani exited in the quarter-finals of the Charlottesville Open, a USD 31,250 PSA Copper squash event in the United States. National champion and fourth seed Senthilkumar was beaten by Egypt's Salman Khalil 12-10, 9-11, 11-8, 11-3 on Thursday. Seventh seed Chotrani went down to American top seed Timothy Brownell, losing 6-11, 11-9, 1-11, 6-11. Both players will now turn their attention to the Open Squash Classic in New York, a higher-tier PSA Bronze tournament worth USD 74,000, starting on Sunday. They will be joined by compatriots Abhay Singh and Ramit Tandon as India seeks stronger results on the US circuit. —*PTI*

Prannoy, Lakshya inspire Indian juniors in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, 3 OCT

India's leading shuttlers HS Prannoy, Lakshya Sen and Ashwini Ponnappa have encouraged the 25-member national squad competing at the BWF World Junior Championships in Guwahati from 6–19 October, the country's first hosting since 2008. Prannoy, a 2010 bronze medallist, called it "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" and the ideal launch pad for senior careers. Lakshya, who has won junior and senior world bronze medals, urged players to stay focused and exploit home conditions, while Ponnappa advised trusting their preparation and enjoying the event. India, with 11 previous medals including Saina Nehwal's 2008 gold, is seeded second in the mixed team event and aiming for its first podium finish alongside strong medal hopes in individual categories. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X/ TheHockeyIndia

India A women's hockey team begins China tour

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

India A women's hockey team is set to travel to China for a five-match series against Liaoning from 13 to 21 October. All matches will be played at Liaoning Sports Centre in Dalian, with fixtures scheduled on 13, 15, 17, 19 and 21 October. The squad has been carefully selected to balance experienced performers with promising youngsters who have made their mark at the national level. Defender Manisha Chauhan will lead the side, bringing tactical awareness and leadership skills. The squad will be guided by Dave Smolenaars, analytical coach of the senior women's team. Smolenaars said: "Playing in China will give them a platform to showcase their skills, adapt to new conditions, and build confidence under pressure. The lessons will contribute to their growth and long-term progress of Indian women's hockey." —*PTI*

Mirabai wins silver at Weightlifting World Championships

FORDE, 3 OCT

Star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu secured a silver medal in the 48kg category at the World Championships in Forde, Norway, adding another accolade to her decorated career. The 2017 World Champion and 2022 silver medallist achieved a total lift of 199kg, combining 84kg in the Snatch with 115kg in the Clean and Jerk. This performance follows her recent move down from the 49kg division.

Chanu faced early challenges, failing twice at 87kg in the Snatch, but regained her rhythm in the Clean and Jerk. She successfully completed all three attempts, culminating in a confident 115kg lift which is the same weight that won her Olympic silver at Tokyo 2021. Expressing satisfaction, Chanu said the podium finish provides "great confidence for the year ahead."

Chief coach Vijay Sharma praised her consistency and commitment, noting that this marks the beginning of a critical phase in her career. He added that their focus is now on refining technique and building strength ahead of the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Gold went to North Korea's Ri Song Gum, who dominated with a 213kg total (91kg Snatch + 122kg Clean and Jerk), setting new world records in both the total and Clean and Jerk. Thailand's Thanyathon Sukcharoen claimed bronze with 198kg.

Chanu's performance reaffirms her status as one of India's premier weightlifters and a strong contender on the international stage. –*PTI*

Mirabai Chanu claims silver medal in 48kg division at World Weightlifting Championships 2025 **PHOTO:ANI**

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

England records opening 10-wicket win against SA

GUWAHATI, 3 OCT

England began their ICC Women's World Cup campaign in emphatic fashion, registering a commanding 10-wicket victory over South Africa at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium. The win underlined their dominance with both ball and bat, leaving the South Africans struggling throughout.

After winning the toss and opting to field, England's bowlers dismantled South Africa's batting line-up, restricting them to a mere 69 runs in 20.4 overs, which is the third-lowest total in Women's ODI history. Left-arm spinner Linsey Smith, making her World Cup debut, impressed with figures of 3/7. Skipper Nat Sciver-Brunt and pacer Lauren Bell shared three wickets, while Charlie Dean contributed 2/14. Wicketkeeper Sinalo Jafta was the only batter to offer meaningful resistance, scoring 22, as ten South African batters failed to reach double figures.

Chasing a trivial target, England openers Tammy Beaumont and Amy Jones approached the innings with calm authority. Jones struck 40 not out from 50 balls, and Beaumont added 21 from 35, combining in a composed partnership to reach the target in just 14.1 overs without loss.

The emphatic victory gives England an ideal start to their tournament, highlighting their depth in both bowling and batting, while South Africa will need to regroup following a disastrous opening performance. The match also emphasised England's ability to dominate under pressure, setting a strong tone for the remainder of the World Cup.

Brief Scores: South Africa 69 (Jafta 22; Smith 3/7, Dean 2/14) lost to England 73/0 (Jones 40*, Beaumont 21*). – *ANI*

England's Tammy Beaumont, second left, and Amy Jones, second right, being congratulated by South Africa's players after winning the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 ODI cricket match between South Africa and England, at the ACA Stadium, Barsapara, in Guwahati **PHOTO: PTI**

SL face mighty Aus in Women's World Cup

COLOMBO, 3 OCT

Sri Lanka face a daunting task in their second ICC Women's World Cup match on Saturday, taking on defending champions Australia at home in Colombo. The hosts were beaten by India in their opener, struggling with sloppy fielding and a batting collapse that saw them all out for 211 despite nine players reaching double figures.

Skipper Chamari Athapaththu will be central to Sri Lanka's hopes. The left-hander famously scored an unbeaten 178 against Australia in the 2017 World Cup and will aim to inspire her team once again. Young talents such as Harshitha Samarawickrama, Vishmi Gunaratne, and Kavisha Dilhari are expected to support Athapaththu, while the bowling duo of Inoka Ranaweera and Udeshika Prabodhani will need consistent backing.

Australia come with momentum after a dominant victory over New Zealand. Their top-order, led by Beth Mooney and captain Alyssa Healy, is backed by Ashleigh Gardner's counter-attacking century and lower-order contributions from Kim Garth. Pacers Annabel Sutherland and Megan Schutt, along with Ellyse Perry and Elana King, provide a formidable bowling attack.

For Sri Lanka, only a disciplined all-round performance can challenge the seven-time champions. With four more home fixtures ahead, the hosts will look to make a mark and build confidence for the remainder of the tournament. –*PTI*

- Australia come with momentum after a dominant victory over New Zealand

Vidarbha tighten grip with 224-run lead over RoI

NAGPUR, 3 OCT

Ranji Trophy champions Vidarbha tightened their hold on the Irani Cup, establishing a strong first-innings lead before extending it with a steady batting effort in their second outing at the VCA Stadium on Friday.

After compiling 342 in their first innings, Vidarbha bowled out Rest of India for just 214 in 69.5 over's, securing a 128-run advantage. At stumps on Day 3, they were 96 for 2 in their second innings, stretching their overall lead to 224 runs with two full days still to play.

Fast bowler Yash Thakur spearheaded Vidarbha's charge, returning fine figures of 4 for 66 to break the backbone of the Rest of India batting. He received strong support from left-arm spinner Parth Rekhade (2/14) and all-rounder Harsh Dubey (2/58), while Aditya Thakare and Darshan Nalkande chipped in with a wicket apiece.

Rajat Patidar offered the only real resistance for Rest of India, battling for three hours to make 66 off 125 balls. Opener Abhimanyu Easwaran contributed 52, but the rest of the batting faltered badly as Vidarbha closed the day on top. —*PTI*

Sana Mir defends 'Azad Kashmir' comment

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Former Pakistan captain Sana Mir has defended her use of the term "Azad Kashmir" during commentary for Pakistan-Bangladesh Women's World Cup match.

While discussing batter Natalia Pervaiz's background, Mir referred to her coming from "Azad Kashmir," prompting criticism from some Indian fans. Critics argued the correct term is Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and accused Mir of politicising the broadcast.

Mir clarified on X: "My comment about a Pakistan player's hometown was only meant to highlight the challenges she faced of coming from a certain region in Pakistan and her incredible journey. Please don't politicise it... As a commentator, we are meant to focus on the sport. There is no malice in my heart or any intention to hurt sentiments."

This comes after the recent off-field tensions between India and Pakistan at the men's Asia Cup. The Women's World Cup continues in India and Sri Lanka. –*PTI*

'ASIA CUP ROW WON'T DISTRACT INDIAN WOMEN'

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Former wicketkeeper Saba Karim believes the recent Asia Cup row may add pressure to India's ICC Women's World Cup clash against Pakistan in Colombo, but expects Harmanpreet Kaur's side to remain focused. Following the men's team precedent, the Indian women are unlikely to engage in customary handshakes with Pakistani players. Karim said the gulf in quality between the teams is "too vast" for Pakistan to pose a major threat. He added that India's superior resources, experience, and support staff will help the team block out distractions and deliver a strong performance despite off-field controversy.

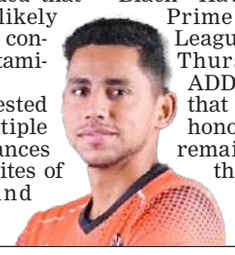
—*PTI*

VOLLEYBALL STAR SAHIL WINS REPRIEVE IN DOPING CASE

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Volleyball player Sahil Kumar received a temporary reprieve after NADA Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel (ADDP) lifted his provisional suspension. The panel concluded that the violation "likely stemmed from the consumption of a contaminated product".

Kumar, who tested positive for multiple prohibited substances including metabolites of GW1516 and Oxandrolone in an out-of-competition test in May, was suspended on 12 June. Following the interim order issued on October 1, Kumar was cleared to compete immediately and played for Hyderabad Black Hawks in their Prime Volleyball League match on Thursday. The ADDP emphasised that any medals or honours he earns remain subject to the final verdict. –*PTI*



BACK AFTER 11 YEARS

Usain Bolt lights up Mumbai in football exhibition

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Mumbai came alive with football fever as legendary sprinter Usain Bolt swapped his running spikes for football studs in a 5-vs-5 all-star exhibition match at Mukesh Mills.

Organised by PUMA India to celebrate the country's football culture, the event brought together players from Mumbai City FC and Bengaluru FC alongside Bollywood celebrities for an electrifying evening.

Known globally for his love of the game, Bolt lit up the pitch with his trademark flair and energy. Switching sides, he thrilled fans with bursts of pace and skill that reflected his passion for football as much as his sprinting legacy.

The evening began with Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan conducting the toss, won by Bengaluru FC. She remained pitch-side, cheering both teams.

"Football has been one of my first loves after track and field, and playing in Mumbai alongside athletes, celebrities, and fans was electric," Bolt said. "The passion, the noise, the atmosphere, this high stays long after the final whistle," he added.

The match showcased India's finest talent, Sunil Chhetri's sharp passes, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu's saves, and Mumbai City FC stars Suresh Wangjam, Akash Mishra, and Phurba Lachenpa in action. Bollywood stars Dino Morea and Aparshakti Khurana added extra energy.

Bolt previously visited India in 2014, playing an exhibition cricket match with Yuvraj Singh. With eight Olympic golds, 13 World Championship medals, and world records in 100m, 200m, and 4x100m relays, Bolt remains a global sporting icon even after retiring in 2017. — *ANI*

The event brought together Usain Bolt, players from Mumbai City FC and Bengaluru FC alongside Bollywood celebrities for an electrifying evening **PHOTO:X/BENGALURUFC**